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REFLECTIONS

On the FATE of

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P E T I T I O N

For RELIEF in the MATTER of

S U B S C R I P T I O N,

Offered to the Honourable HOUSE of COMMONS,
February 6th, 1772.

W I T H

OBSERVATIONS on the Reverend Dean TUCKER's
APOLOGY for the Present CHURCH of ENGLAND,
as by Law established.

By a Member of a Law-Society.

Domine DECANE, vos estis iratus!

LUTHER.

L O N D O N:

Printed in the Year MDCCCLXXII.



Nec gratius aliquid vel Deo Patri, vel Salvatori nostro, vel Doctrinæ Ecclesiæ Christianæ, ejusque celeberrimæ parti, Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, facturum me esse existimo, quām Patri cœlesti cui soli competit jus conscientiæ leges figendi, Christoque, qui unicus Ecclesiæ dux et magister est, integrum illam condendi Articulos Fidei *Anθερτιαν* tribuendo, quam non nisi summo Ecclesiæ et Fidei nostræ detrimento, Patribus et Conciliis adscripsit non tantum Ecclesia Romana, sed ij qui Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ præ ceteris genuinos Filios, immo Antistites se esse gloriantur, tamen Articulo sexto ejusdem Ecclesiæ aut palam cum Thorndicio nostrate renunciant, aut Doctrinas *αγραφους* introducendo, de Sacerdotio, propriè sic dicto, de Precibus pro mortuis celebrandis, atque alijs ejusdem generis permultis, eidem clanculum adversantur, et reformatæ Ecclesiæ unicum Fundamentum radicitus evellunt. Hæc diu mæstusque conspexi.

WHITBY.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

SEVERAL odd things in these Papers will not be approved either by the Petitioners or their Opponents. A circumstance which may serve to convince the Reader, that the Author is in no very intimate connections with either of them. They who, from a long familiarity with the said Author, think they know him best, would as soon expect he should sit down to make a Periwig, as to write upon the Affairs of the Church, as they are very sensible not only of his constant attention to matters of another nature, but of his freedom from all expectations of being benefited to the value of Sixpence, whatever alterations are, or are not made, in consequence of the present dispute.

R E F L E C T I O N S, &c.

THE sentiments of our countrymen are so divided concerning the Petition for relief in the matter of Subscription, and the characters and views of the Petitioners, and such is the zeal and vehemence with which the advocates on each side espouse their respective parties, that he who pretends to write upon the subject without any prejudice towards one side or the other, must not expect to be believed. For my part, I cannot boast of being more disengaged from partial impressions than my neighbours, and therefore shall not affect the character of a Moderator between the litigants ; intending only in this little tract to make a few plain observations on some matters of fact which have happened within my own knowledge, and on the representations which have been made of some others, retailed by common report.

As far as my conversation and intercourse with men of sense have reached, the sentiments of many on this subject have varied since the debate of the *sixth* of *February* 1772, when Sir W——m M——h moved to have this Petition received in the House of Commons. There were auditors admitted into the Galleries on that memorable day, who came there for mere amusement, and with the same sort of vacant curiosity (will the Petitioners forgive me for stationing myself in that number?) which would send them to any common spectacle of entertainment. Few of these had any other conception of the nature of the controversy,

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than what they had picked up from coffee-house declamations, which left the real merits of the cause just as they found them: and the question was so far a moot point with the public, that, as I have been informed, policies were opened at the usual places, where the Petition was *done*, after such rates as intelligence from the knowing ones suggested to the adventurers.

On the other hand, numbers came with the most violent prepossessions in favour of the church, whose very existence was by them understood to be at issue. The bias of these gentlemen was not unknown to some friends of the Petition, who failed not to remark in the progress, and particularly at the end of the debate, an astonishment in these unfriendly countenances, which could only be accounted for by their surprize, that so much could be said for what they took it for granted, must be a losing cause. And indeed such was the superiority of the speakers on the side of the Petition in point of argument, that the enmity of many respectable individuals, who caine to the hearing with the most hostile dispositions towards the Petitioners, was greatly abated, and, in some instances, entirely subsided.

The truth is, the zeal of the adverse party broke out a little unexpectedly, and prevented the operation of a sort of parliamentary craft, often projected by the leaders of a majority, *viz.* to suffer questions of moment, which have no *ministerial utility* to recommend them, to die away in silence, with some little shew of a decent regard to the subject, and the characters of those who espouse it.

When the question has been asked, “ Where would have “ been the *political* inconvenience of granting the prayer of “ this Petition ? ” The answer has gone upon a notion, or, if you please, a prejudice, that my Lords the Bishops have
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been for a course of years in strict *Alliance* with the conductors of our civil affairs, and have afforded them a very valuable aid in the determination of several questions, not only such as more immediately respected the general welfare of the state, but such likewise as were relative to ministerial power, and took their rise from very inferior considerations.

"An *Alliance*," say these answerers, "gives us the idea of *covenants*, and of *reciprocal obligations*. And one can not wonder, that, where this venerable corps imagine themselves to be interested, their *Allies* should adopt *their* sense of things, and employ their whole influence to accommodate so consequential a band of Auxiliaries."

Whether this hypothesis is well founded or not, it was generally understood, that, with respect to this Petition, their Lordships were parties on the one side, and the Petitioners on the other. There are not many in the lower, or even in the middle classes of our people, who, considering the distance at which they are kept by their ecclesiastical superiors, can pretend to form any accurate judgment on the proprieties in the episcopal character. Some however there are, and a few of these procured admittance into the Gallery above mentioned, on the day of Trial. One of them, as the audience was departing, asked an anti-petitioning dignitary, with an inimitable archness of aspect, whether he thought their Lordships would subscribe to every thing their Advocates below had advanced in support of their cause?

What reply was made to this, I could not hear; but I have been since informed, that their Lordships were so little edified by some of the like modes of defence, retailed in pamphlets and news-papers, previous to these more solemn

debates, that they found themselves obliged to declare, the writers had no commission from them, and wished their zeal and their knowledge had been more equally matched.

The English have been called a nation of *Conjecturers*. Give them but one fact for a *datum*, and they will build an hundred upon it, some of them founded upon a bare possibility, among others which have a better chance to be brought into existence. The fact to be accounted for on this occasion, was, the hostility of the leading Pastors of a Protestant church to a measure which so many wise and good men have highly approved, and even demonstrated to be just and reasonable.

That class of our fellow-subjects which ministerial derision stigmatizes with the name of *patriotic*, hath more than once insinuated, that the intrigues of the cabinet have a plain tendency to arbitrary rule. On every manœuvre of that complexion, the clerical powers in *Alliance*, will of course be called upon to execute their part of the convention. Their province, upon such emergencies, will be, to keep religious enquiry within its *due* limits. "If men are left free to speculate upon the genuine principles of christianity," say the Politicians, "they may come to stumble upon maxims too favourable to their civil rights and privileges. Ye therefore who have the Watch, make it as sure as you can."

To confirm this conjecture, the four last years of Queen Anne are appealed to. The politicians of that period had an object in their eye which would effectually have superseded the bill of rights, and the protestant act of settlement. The majority of the cloth, faithful to the *Alliance*, were their cordial cooperators. The part assigned them was to bend the necks of the people to the *hierarchical* yoke, by way

way of suppling them to the *political* one. Instances of their industry in this department will be remembered, without quoting particulars. "And though," say the *Conjecturers*, "the sacerdotal spirit was under rebuke during the reigns of "the two immediate successors of Queen Anne, it was nei- "ther idle nor improvident, but kept its muniments in ex- "cellent preservation, against the time when it might more "openly pretend to the patronage and protection of the civil "powers."

I wish I could treat these speculations as the mere dreams of a party ; and I certainly should do it, were there not too much verisimilitude in more recent events, to justify an inquisitive writer for rejecting the *hypothesis*.

There are few passages in the New Testament, which have employed my meditations more, than that prophetic notice given by old Simeon *, *Luke ii. 25*, that *the thoughts of many hearts should be revealed* in consequence of the mission of *Jesus Christ*.

Government ecclesiastical has been so managed in these latter ages, even in Protestant churches, as to tempt many capable readers of the Bible, to suspect a tendency in it to exclude that kind of rule which Christ and his Apostles have prescribed to their successors in the province of *feeding the flock of God*.

Our common people have been the less aware of this encroachment, as great pains have been taken to teach them from their infancy, that not only an authority to teach was left to church-governors, by the founders of the Christian religion, but an authority to prescribe *modes of faith*

* Not the *Simeon*, who in the St. James's Chronicle of February 8, 1772, called the thirty-nine articles the **TYE-WIGS** of the Church.

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and *worship*, in all cases where they should find it expedient.

There is a certain sort of men appearing among us at particular intervals, who, when they get a *New Testament* into their hands, will be telling the world what they find in it, though it is ever so contrary to the *bon ton*. Among others of this disposition, may be reckoned, *John Milton*, *John Locke*, *Samuel Clarke*, and *Benjamin Hoadley*; the last of whom is supposed to have greatly contributed, in his day, to keep the hierarchical maxims of the *four last years* above mentioned, much in the shade, by confronting them with the genuine documents of the sacred writings.

But he was mortal, and so were his political patrons, and about the time of his demise, certain geniuses arose, who, by putting some of their own old wine into his new bottles, amused the world with a kind of *half-christianity*, which kept things pretty well *in petto*, till the taste of the world was prepared for a more complete adulteration.

But within these last ten or twelve years, some men of more courage than discretion, have undertaken to examine this heterogeneous system with precision, and in the course of the process, seem to have found reason to go farther than even Dr. *Hoadley* had ventured: namely, to contrast the assumed powers of church and state in alliance, touching the imposition of subscriptions to human creeds and confessions, with the genuine rules of government exhibited in the scriptures, and occasionally acknowledged by the church of *England* itself.

Here the lurking spirit of church domination broke forth in all its glory. In truth, the provocation was intolerable. Matters were going quietly on, in the most favourable manner for the great cause of the *Alliance*. The good Protestant

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people of England, had patiently suffered themselves to be told, that no christianity is authentic, which is not taught in the forms of the church of *England*. They had patiently suffered themselves to be told, on another hand, that Religion is an *Engine* contrived to keep the people in subjection, and that no body knows how to work it but the Clergy. And lastly, the good Protestants of this kingdom received information, and that from an authority it became them not to question, that Popery was become an *inoffensive* system, and that the vigilance of their Pastors, heretofore so solicitous to guard against its influence, might now be better employed.

When the ancient church-system was so hopefully reviving, and gradually gathering strength, when *the jest*, as *Falstaffe* says, *was so forward, and a-foot too*, what could be more vexatious, than for these impertinent scripturists to pretend to lay open its deformities to the meanest of the people?

The alarm however being taken, champions in abundance arose to chastise those retrograde sons of the church. Champions indeed of different complexions, and consequently not uniform in their defences. Some adopted the political religion of *Hobbes*. Others drew their arguments from the traditional testimonies of the independent powers of the Hierarchy; many of these were volunteers. They who wrote or published by *commission*, generally trimmed between the two, and were incessantly drawing back with one hand, the concessions they had given up with the other, with a view, it should seem, of magnifying the moderation of those who set them to work, at the expence of their consistency.

The countenance of superiors could not keep these performances in credit. Common sense was disgusted with the sophistry employed in them, and liberal minds were in pain
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for the consequences of adopting it as part of the public system. And this probably (for I am in no secret of this sort) gave the hint, that the case being now before the public, a proper time was at hand to attempt a deliverance from a bond, which, besides being contrary to the dictates of Christianity, and the concessions of our protestant church, could no longer be subservient to the purposes of uniformity, as they who laboured to support it, were themselves so inconsistent in their schemes of reconciling the injunction to any principles of reason or justice.

Why the Petitioners chose the method of applying to the House of Commons in the first instance, I can offer nothing but conjectures : and these I must postpone, till I have attempted to account for another appearance, and to discover some reason why our ecclesiastical governors, who have so long affected the character of *moderation*, should, upon occasion of this *Petition*, be so far surprised out of *their usual presence of mind*, as to make no secret of their enmity to it.

From the moment an intimation was given, that such Petition was intended, the emissaries of those who lay claim to orthodoxy as their peculiar, endeavoured to load those who should be concerned in it, with every evil imputation that a malignant heart could harbour. At first, this was a *postulatum ex hypothesi* : but it has been continued even to this hour, when the Petitioners are better known. Not one of them is allowed to have acted from a principle of conscience, though it is so hard to say, what else could set them to work. If I am rightly informed, a great part of them are men of respectable secular connexions, and might hope, by the interest of their friends and patrons, to rise to as comfortable and honourable preferments as the most of those who draw the pen against them. Would such men cut the grafts under-

der their own feet, without any motive consistent with common sense?

Though I am a stranger to almost every Bishop upon the bench, I will venture to affirm, that their Lordships have a better opinion both of the sense and integrity of the Petitioners. Some of them are authors, and by what I have seen of their compositions, their Lordships are incapable of being imposed upon by the representations of those very indifferent writers, who retailed this calumny to the public.

So however it fell out, and the general cry was, "The Petitioners are endeavouring to ruin the *Establishment* ;" a complex and equivocal term, which some are unable, and others too indolent, or too artful, to analyse. The herd of our conformists take it to mean the stones and timber of a Cathedral; and to speak the honest truth, they, who use the word in another sense, and ascribe these lethiferous consequences to an alteration of subscription to the thirty-nine articles, or even to the substitution of the scriptures for the articles themselves, are very little wiser, or else not half so honest.

Dignitaries indeed, of some gravity, have asserted, that whatever the intention of the Petitioners might be, this ruin of the Establishment would be the effect of executing their plan. But not one man in ten could believe they were in earnest, till one of them undertook to give the proof in form.

This learned divine, however, wanted two *postulata* to make way to his point, which perhaps he might not so easily obtain. What these were, shall be observed by and by.—But the conclusion being obtained, it was natural enough to ask, what was to be substituted in the place of the *Establishment*? — Why — they knew not well what — CONFUSION

was the *motte de guerre*—and *Confusion*, it seems, stood for *Popery, Presbyterianism, Methodism, Arianism, Socinianism*, and what not.

I cannot recollect that the Petitioners have taken any extraordinary pains to silence these clamours. They are the clamours of an uninformed multitude, by which none will be influenced, but such as idolize the mere word *Establishment*, and, in complaisance to Dean *Tucker*, will look at nothing but through his spectacles. It is well known to all men with their eyes open, that *Popery, Presbyterianism, Methodism, Arianism, Socinianism, Deism, &c.* flourish sufficiently, some of them in the very bosom of the Establishment, others in spite of it. The powers in being could not want the means of dealing with them in time and place, if there were not considerations that over-rule their inclinations to suppress them, if any such they have; and hence I conclude, that however these popular clamours may accommodate the Establishment in view of this Petition, the *Confusion*, as it is stated by the Dean of *Glocester*, is not the thing which disposed my Lords the Bishops to oppose it.

Time, which brings most things to light, has at length given us a peep at the true secret. The world, till very lately, had heard but of *Thirty-nine Articles* of the church of England. We are now told of a *Fortieth*, consisting, indeed, only of two words, but those of more worth than any two thousand, if so many are to be found in the remaining *Thirty-nine*.

These two words are, PUBLIC PEACE, which, for the present, we will suppose to mean, the peace of church and state in *Alliance*.

There are many good things in the *Thirty-nine Articles*, among others that are sufficiently exceptionable. We are told

told that the Establishment cannot subsist without subscription to *all* and *every* of them. I don't, however, recollect any Law by which the presiding officers in the church are obliged to subscribe them, and yet the nature of the case would seem to suggest, that the more important the charge, the more necessary to take ample security for the due execution of it. Shall we say, that a full *Affent* and *Consent* to this *Fortieth Article*, either expressed or understood, is a sufficient pledge for their adherence to the established faith? Be it so; I cannot think, however, that our R. R. Pastors would abandon the whole *Thirty-nine* for the sake of the *Fortieth*.

When we consider the transitory nature of the fashion of the world, and even of those things in it which are called *Establishments*, we can depend upon no human provisions for the perpetuity of them. The time was, when a British Parliament had their objections to the *Thirty-sixth* of our present Articles, and thought the *public peace* required a pretty remarkable contravention to its contents. Should such an exigence happen again, I cannot but believe my Lords the Bishops would think the support of their calling worth a little contention, more particularly, if a mode of consecration, which would let mere Presbyters into all the privileges of a prelacy, should be the *Nostrum* in vogue. I am convinced too, that their Lordships would risque something to keep out the *fond things* of Popery, particularly that *very fond thing*, the waiting for their Bulls and their Pall from the Bishop of *Rome*.

Upon this view of things, I may, perhaps, be allowed to venture a short comment on this *Fortieth Article* of the politician's religion.

"This Petition, if admitted," it is said, "would break the *public peace*. The Bishops are against it, not particu-

"larly on account of its intrinsic demerit, but of its tendency to disturb the *peace* of the *public*, which the terms of a certain *pactum conventum* requires them to preserve at all adventures."

This circumstance leads us to consider, in what respects the public peace would be affected by granting the prayer of this petition. And first of the *Public Peace* of the *State*; how the public peace of the *Church* would be hazarded by it, shall be considered in its place.

I have heard so much of the good sense of Lord *North*, and particularly of his dexterity in extricating himself from the difficulties incident to his high station, that I must presume he is particularly attentive to the prudential measures of his Predecessors in the same department, and consequently to the conduct of the late Lord *Orford* on an occasion similar to this on the carpet.

When his Lordship, then Sir *Robert Walpole*, was solicited by the Protestant Dissenters to promote the repeal of the *Test Act*, so far as related to them, he saw the righteousness and sound policy of the measure, with full conviction, and would have been led to it by his own disposition, could he have considered himself as unconnected with his *particular* service to Government. He saw the expediency of strengthening the hands of the King and his real friends, by providing a balance against the malignity of Papists and Jacobites. But there was then a *Mongrel* faction on foot, in no small credit with the populace, the leaders of which professed themselves to be whigs in state matters, and tories in the concerns of the church. Among these was a large majority of the clergy. What their tenets were, may be learned from the pamphlets of those times, particularly from the treatise of the late Bishop *Ellis*, upon

the subject of the Test. In contemplation of what he had to expect from that quarter, the Minister thus bespoke the *Petitioners* of that day.

"Gentlemen, you are too fast friends to his Majesty and his Government, not to wish his ministers may be as little incommoded as possible by the seditious clamours and practices of those who *hate* both *you* and *us*. The present disposition of the clergy, particularly those of this city, is sufficiently open to your observation. It is as much as we can do to get them to hold their tongues, by soothing, humouring, and occasionally preferring them, now that no umbrage is given them. What do you think would be the case, if by the repeal you solicit, we should open fifty mouths in fifty pulpits every Sunday, against the King and his ministers, upon the pretence of their endeavouring to ruin the church?"

I doubt not but Sir *Robert* had a copious list of reverend declaimers on this topic to exhibit, not more copious, however, than Lord *North* might procure at this period in a very few hours, from gentlemen well informed of the sense of the leading churchmen of the times. His Lordship, indeed, seems, by an expression hereafter to be noted, to be in possession of a more numerous catalogue than even Sir *Robert* himself. The *Rutherfordians*, the *Balguists*, the *Ibbetsonians*, the *Powellites*, the *Tuckerians*, the *Madanites*, the *Topladians*, &c. &c. &c. make up no despicable combination, not to mention my Lord of L——'s Phalanx, who occupy the city pulpits as body guards in ordinary to the ruling system.

I do not believe that, if the prayer of the Petition had been granted, above half a dozen of these would have joined Mr. *Romaine* in his resolution, *never more to mount a pulpit*; and

it may be easily conceived, what the weekly declamations of men so heated and irritated by disappointment, might have effected towards the downfal of those in power, who thus presumed to provoke, what *Swift* calls, the *Sacred Order*. It is well known what impressions the superstitious grimace of external forms, and the enthusiasm of inward light make upon the vulgar, in their *separate* operations; what then must be their effect when their forces are *combined*, and pointed with vengeance at the devoted head of a Minister?

Add to all this, that the question had been argued upon the foot of *civil utility*, not indeed originally by the Petitioners, who only followed whither their adversaries chose to lead them. The *Rotherams*, the *Balguys*, the *Forsters*, and the *Tuckers*, were the men, who, under the conduct of an eminent leader, brought crude politics into the dispute, and from their attachment to this topic, it might be concluded *a priori*, that it was too precious to be parted with, if Statesmen and Magistrates should disoblige them.

The ingenious Gentleman, therefore, who brought to light this *Fortieth Article*, should have set the saddle on the right horse, and have told the company who they were, who would have the first scruple to subscribe it. Not, surely, the Petitioners who obtained the relief, and whose principle view in seeking it, was to becalm this boisterous spirit of contention in their high-church brethren, and whose success could not possibly have worse consequences, with respect to diversities of opinion, than are already produced by the different judgments exhibited in the writings and preachings of those, who subscribe the *thirty-nine Articles* without any scruple whatever.

For my own part, I have that opinion of the good sense and enlightened minds of many of our present Prelates, that I am obliged to believe, if there could have been any security

rity given for the establishment of this *Fortieth Article*; they would not have opposed the prayer of this Petition. Few of them indeed have given us any explicit opinion on the subject of it, and I draw my conclusion only from the tenor of their pastoral admonitions, which when their Lordships have thought proper to touch upon these late calls for reformation, have, so far as I can learn, chiefly turned upon the tendency of *Innovations* to confusion and disorder *.

As the case has been stated above, it may perhaps be said, "that the influence of their Lordships, whether in consequence of their smiles or their frowns, would have checked the zeal and insolence of such of their subalterns as might be disposed to express their discontents at the success of the Petitioners." But their Lordships would have had the example of an *Hoadley* before their eyes, and perhaps of one or two survivors in their own body, whose lawn could not protect them from the strictures of their inferiors, the moment they left the beaten track of established system. The benefit of establishing this *Fortieth article exclusively*, was well understood during the last pontifical reign. For this blessed purpose, the spiritual Head of the Church, condescended, as we are told, to become a *Reviewer* †, particularly of theological novelties, which he likewise took other sorts of pains to strangle in the birth. Concerning which piece of ecclesiastical policy, it has been whispered, the book-sellers of *London* and *Westminster* could, if they would, give us some curious anecdotes ‡.

* See the last Sermon before the Lords, January 30, 1772.

† See the Preface to *Junius's Letters*, published in octavo, 1771.

‡ Sometimes the secret transpired, i. e. when care was not taken to divide the *Hush-money* properly. The late *Andrew Millar* had two or three entertaining stories on this subject. Neither was the moral Mr. *Richardson* unconscious of the practice.

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I have remarked above, what pains have been taken to represent the Petitioners as men of no principle, as men of the worst designs with respect both to church and state.

It was well for these Orators, that they were not called upon to support their accusations by competent proof before a legal tribunal. In the mean time their insinuations were of infinite service to the good cause. Had the good people of England been suffered to persuade themselves, that the Petitioners are men of serious piety, and unspotted probity, who had nothing in view but the liberty of regulating their instructions by the plain dictates of the *written word*, it must be confessed there were consequences in view not very edifying to those Gentlemen, who are so much enamoured with *peace and quietness*.

One effect of peace and quietness is said to be, a very considerable increase of Popery. For proofs and instances of this, we have been referred to every city and market-town where there is a mass-house, and to the environs of the mansion of every Roman-catholic Lord and Gentleman in the kingdom.

Public peace hath likewise produced some other blessed effects, such as a multiplication of benevolent associations at *Ranelagh, Soho, Oxford road, &c. &c.* where however it has been said, the morals of many who attend them have acquired a taint, not very consistent with the *purity* of the religion they are supposed to profess. And hints have been thrown out, that however the *peace of the public* might be undisturbed by these Assemblies of good company, that of *private families* owes them nothing on that score.

It may be supposed, that to provide correctives for these *bagatelles*, would interrupt the important meditations of statesmen upon plans of government of ten times the consequence

quence to the public ; and it might be deemed great cruelty to break in upon the repose of a contemplative ecclesiastic, by recommending some particular notice of these little deviations from the spirit of christianity, while THE CHURCH is in no immediate danger from them. Thanks to heaven, there have been no *Rebellions* since the year 1746, nor any *Earthquakes* since the days of Bishop *Sherlock*, and it seems to be a point of prudence and good husbandry, to reserve the powers of remonstrance till it shall please providence to call for them by such manifest exhibitions of its displeasure.

I have met with both politicians and divines, who have said with a kind of sneering complacency, that it is quite sufficient to turn over the insolence of Popery, and the licentiousness of Protestants, to the correction of the *Methodists*. But by the leave of these gentlemen, matters have taken a turn with respect to these zealots ; which seems to have disqualified them for either of these provinces. A learned prelate of the establishment hath endeavoured to find out the complexion of Popery, in the doctrines and practices of these Pietists ; and Mr. *Wesley*, as if he intended to support the Bishop's comparison, hath patronized a translation of the life of the Jesuit *Xavier*, as a proper manual for the edification of his flock.

Another Bishop, in the early days of Methodism, characterised the leaders as *honest madmen, who spent all their fire against vice*. His Lordship, however, understood in process of time, that they meddled with something else, and was put to the pains of writing a just volume to set the world right in the *doctrine of Grace*, which had undergone, as he thought, some misrepresentations in the works of Mr. *Wesley* and others.

And indeed, whatever the fire of Methodism against vice

might be in the beginning, the furnace has burnt out all that sort of fuel long ago. The fire is now kept alive by the combustibles of a sort of controversy, where theological dogmata make the blaze, with little or no supply from the *practical licentiousness* of the times ; not to mention the affairs the Methodists have now with the Petitioners, and the necessity of lending their shoulders to support the Articles in agreement with their old friends Dr. *Nowell*, Dr. *Randolph*, and other Doctors, whose charges, sermons, and publications, would not justify their accepting the aid of such fellow-labourers, but in the present case of *extreme distress*.

Admitting the Petitioners to be men of sense and conscience, and as such anxious for the security of the Protestant religion, it is hardly to be doubted, but they are desirous to prevent the fatal consequences of an increase of Papists, both to Church and State. It should seem to be no light matter to English Protestants in *any* station, that his Majesty's subjects are so frequently led astray from their allegiance to their lawful Sovereign, and taught to transfer it to the Bishop of *Rome*. On the other hand, a protestant pastor or teacher, cannot well be unconcerned, that so many of his flock should be misled by the artful emissaries of *Rome*, from the Rock of their salvation, to the impiety of an idolatrous worship, and the bondage of a superstition, which rests solely on a blasphemous usurpation of divine powers incommunicable to frail and fallible man. Hence I conjecture the Petitioners, if released from the bond of their present subscription, would exert themselves in opposition to this capital corruption, and vigorously attack Popery *a fundamentis*.

But here I expect to be told, that their objections to the
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thirty-nine articles, so many of which are express in condemning the errors of Popery, is no sign of their zeal to suppress it, but rather of a contrary disposition, as some of their adversaries have been charitable enough to insinuate.

But be pleased to observe, I say *a fundamentis*; and I doubt not but many of the Petitioners think as I do, that it is in vain to renounce the particular doctrines of Popery, while they are obliged to assent, that, *the church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith*. If it may be proved, that the church of *England* hath this authority, it will be impossible to prove, that the church of *Rome* hath it *not*, and to what purpose is it to condemn those *fond things* to-day, which may be established by the authority of the church to-morrow *?

The nugatory and equivocal restriction in the subsequent part of the *twentieth Article*, will not help at all to reconcile this authority to the constitution of a genuine protestant church.

Allow the church to be the *witness and keeper of holy writ*, exclusive of all *other witnesses and keepers*, and she will be under no difficulty, in case of controversies, in *witnessing and keeping her own sense of scripture*, so as to stand clear of all *repugnancy* whatever. She will witness her own interpretations, and none others, to be true, and ascertain them by her supposed authority, to be the rule for all her members; and to be satisfied, that the church of *England* is not freer from this presumption than any other church, the inquisitive reader may examine those texts of scripture, which *Rogers*,

* It was probably on this consideration, that the late Dr. *Rundle* subscribed the *Irish* articles of religion, only *so far forth as they are opposite to Popery*, as appears by the Primate of *Ireland's Register*, a copy of which was, some years ago, in the hands of a worthy Prelate of the church of *England*.

an authorised interpreter of the *thirty-nine articles*, brings to prove the several propositions into which he analyses them *.

Father Sinclair, in his *Paraphrastic Exposition* of this *Twentieth Article*, fetches his interpretation of this latter part of it (concerning the first part he hath not the least objection to the *literal sense*) from St. Austin, who says, “ Because the “ holy scripture cannot possibly deceive, whosoever is afraid “ of being deceived, let him consult the church, which the “ scripture points out to him without any ambiguity.” Apply this to the church of *England*, and the alternative will be this. If the church of *England* is thus pointed out as an interpreter of scripture, without ambiguity, the church of *England* must be infallible; if otherwise, she hath but an *ambiguous* right to the authority she claims, and they who apply to her for the true sense of scripture, may be deceived.

I cannot indeed conceive in what way the *Public Peace* of the *State* would be affected, should the Petitioners, and others, be let loose to expose the *fundamental* errors of *Papery* to his Majesty’s loyal subjects, in their full deformity; unless there is some secret *Alliance*, of which we are not aware, stipulating, that the Papists should be soothed and indulged in their *political*, as well as their *ecclesiastical opinions*, and set upon a level with his Majesty’s sworn lieges in every article of civil privilege. I trust they are not

* ROGERS exhibits the *Fourth* proposition of the *Twentieth Article*, thus. “ The Church hath power to interpret and expound the word of God.” And for proof of it, brings *Matth. xi. 27*. *No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.* What light this text of scripture gives to the proposition, would require the learning and authority of a whole convocation to explain. Nor do his subsequent proofs from scripture makes us at all wiser.

yet

yet strong enough, either in numbers, or in property, to contest their claims with the present Government in a military way; and I cannot devise what infringement of the public peace would follow from the endeavours of a protestant clergy to prevent their growing any stronger.

And let us not be too presuming. *Public Peace*, in the Gentleman's idea, who would make a doctrinal point of it in a *Fortieth Article*, may be relative to connections, contracts, securities, and reciprocations, of which mere spectators of the visible movements of the grand machine, can know nothing.

But the odds against public peace, I suspect, may be more observable to a common eye, with respect to the other object of a conscientious clergyman's opposition, *viz.* the *vicious dissipation of the times*.

Public dissipation is patronized by men of titles and emblems of great dignity among the Laiety, who may give a sanction to what they please; and it hath been insinuated, that the *Alliance* takes place even in this department, and that clerks with *honourable distinctions*, have rendered these parties quite canonical by their presence and conformity that they might not seem to be disaffected to the *Public Peace*, by the least shew of renitency to such employment.

The Methodists, if they were disposed to display their talents once more against the licentiousness of the great and small vulgar, would have little chance to be heard. Their zeal is intemperate, and their sentences of condemnation outrageous. Not to mention, that till this execrable Petition turned the fire-edge of the orthodox another way, our pulpits echoed with the most furious invectives against their heresies, delusions, and insanity; and they had been now absolutely out of credit, if one of these chemical occasions,

which

which combines the most jarring elements, had not come up-on the *Church Militant*, and obliged her to take in these Pietists as associates in their opposition to the *Antisubscriptionists*, on a compact we may suppose, that while the church connives at their *Calvinistical* divinity, the methodists shall be equally tender of affronting *Arminian* morality. The Public Peace, therefore, runs no risque from this quarter.

It is very possible, however, that sensible men, who search the scriptures with sobriety, and observe the shocking contrariety of our public manners to the dictates of christianity, might have some little influence towards awakening numbers of thoughtless mortals to a sense of their christian obligations. Their personal estimation, the strength of their reasonings, and the consistency of their practical deportment, would of course recommend and give weight to their remonstrances, and might convince numbers, how irreconcileable a course of profligate dissipation is with the Hope of eternal life in the world to come.

You will ask, what hinders them from making such remonstrances *now*?— I will answer your question. They *may* make them, and probably *do* make them *now*; but while they lie under suspicions of subscribing doctrines to which they cannot heartily and sincerely assent, their hearers will think they have a right to conclude, that they are no more in earnest in the *one* case than in the *other*.

It is true, the *Thirty-nine Articles* say nothing for or against *Ranelaghs*, *Routs*, *Pantheons*, &c. &c. and a preacher may, consistently enough with his subscription, hold forth the secret and open iniquities of these, without forfeiting the reputation of an honest man.

But then here is another misfortune. While the *Thirty-nine Articles* stand, as they do by the privilege of an *Establishment*,

blishment, upon a level with the scriptures, and ready, upon some occasions, even to take place of them, the parties concerned to be instructed will conclude, that whatever is not contradicted in the established rule of faith and duty, must be *lawful*. In which conceit it is well if they are not supported by the orations of those of their teachers, who have no idea of qualms on account of subscription.

" Some well-timed political panegyrick," says a shrewd writer, " or some hackneyed Essay on a branch of *moral duty*, " glittering with antithesis, and rounded into sentences of " harmonious cadence, now and then seasoned with some " small comic raillery, or slight strokes of tragic address, " compose the greater part of our modern boasted pulpit " performances."

This is bad enough, but it is worse when our modern *pulpit-critics* undertake the province of, what they please to call, *explaining scripture*; that is to say, of accommodating the most important precepts in the New Testament to the modes of the times, the taste of their patrons, and even to the several corruptions in our religious establishment, which custom has sanctified, which interested churchmen indiscriminately and pertinaciously defend *, and which the connivance of civil Government will probably suffer to proceed to that deplorable *Crisis*, when the state will *really* " have more " *political need* of the church, than the church will have of " the state;" — a most insolent insinuation, for which a truly patriotic senate would have unfrocked the author, without troubling the convocation with the discussion of his theological Principles.

If we should be thought to ask more than it is reasonable

* For a complete specimen, see Dr. H——x's three Sermons.

to grant, *viz.* that the preaching of this loose morality hath arisen from a certain habit of explaining away the genuine sense of the Articles, I shall only say, that this indulgence, granted to public dissipation, was not the *pulpit-fashion* when it plainly appeared, that the clergy *believed* what they subscribed, and took no common pains to make every body else believe it too. Nor indeed is it at all an unnatural supposition, that they, whose casuistry upon the Articles has been so successful as to turn them to the support of *Arminianism*, should be inclined, where the occasion called for it, to try the experiment upon the scriptures, and give the rigid precept a more courteous aspect towards the *manners* of the *Epicurean*.

I will venture then to conclude from these premisses, that if serious, learned, and conscientious men, were set at liberty to deliver the plain documents of the scriptures without disguise, and without the apprehension of being reproached for contravening their previous engagements to the established doctrine of the church, we should hear much oftener from the pulpit of the consequences, both present and future, of our popular corruptions, to the edification, perhaps the conversion of numbers, who, for want of such instruction, may be in the very *gall of bitterness*, and *the bond of iniquity*.

I am apt to believe too, that the rising generation of the clergy, by setting out upon a firmer and less variable foundation than their predecessors, would furnish the public with an increase of conscientious pastors, who not being encumbered either with the *prejudices*, the *cautious timidity*, or the *courtly delicacy* of modern expectants, would exert themselves with freedom and spirit in the cause of their religion and country, and endeavour at least to rescue them both

from

from the *political* as well as the *evangelical* WO denounced upon those *who call evil good, and good evil.*

And indeed, who could answer for the *Public Peace* upon such an event? If we are to believe a sort of observers, who sometimes drop hints for our admonition, it is a maxim of modern policy to amuse the common sense and the powers of reflection of a high spirited people, with every kind of idle diversion, accompanied with an indulgence of every sensual appetite, to prevent their prying into the principle and tendency of the current state manœuvres, and to habituate them to a luxurious effeminacy and indolence, destructive of that understanding, courage, and strength, which might rouse them to an active vigilance over their liberties, and a spirited opposition to the invaders of them. This is an expedient strongly recommended by expert Politicians *, and has been so often found to have its effects towards keeping the *public peace*, that it is yet, we may well suppose, among the first *elements* in the Grammar of every able Politician.

Upon a prospect therefore of turning our divinity into another channel, (a prospect to which they who examine the terms of the Petition cannot be wholly blind) the patrons of, and associates in, the *amusements* in vogue, cannot be without their apprehensions of a melancholy reverse of their present *peace* and *quiet*. They will naturally reflect, how narrowly the *public peace* had escaped the claws of Sir *John*, in a late attempt upon poor Mrs *Cornelys*, and how likely it was at that crisis, that *the letter of the law* would be a match for a strong exertion of Patrician influence, a case indeed

* Tyrannus viros graves et justos odio prosequitur, suspectosque habet, ac ne qui tales evadant, omni arte curat. Quia vero non prius se tutum putat, quam omnium mores corruperit, Popinas, Ganeas, Lupanaria, Ludos, ut Cyrus demandis Sardis, instituit. *Vind. con. Tyr.* Q. iii.

which has not lately often happened, and may not suddenly happen again ; but is, however, a sufficient warning to beware, that the *public peace* may not run the like risque from *the letter of the gospel*.

This, I apprehend, is one laudable view of proposing this *Fortieth Article*, which being established for subscription, and the interpretation left to the *Heads of the Alliance*, Father *Philips*, and the long Baronet, may, together with their respective associates, sit quietly down to their dinners.

This, you will say, may do for the *State*, as long at least as such temporary expedients are wont to last. But the grand question is, whether this single article would do for the peace of the *Church*, without the addition of the other *Thirty-nine*? For it is to be understood, that the *Church*, in making *her* bargains, is a little more provident than the *State*; and in the word *Peace*, includes the ideas of *Prosperity* and *Affluence*; whereas the *Plenipotentiaries* of the *State*, provided they are not incommoded by opposition in their own particular department, fare extremely well, whatever little distresses the inferior members of the *State* may have to complain of.

This then is the point we have to debate with the learned and ingenious Dr. *John Tucker* the present Dean of *Glocester*, who very modestly desires but two *Postulata* whereon to erect a demonstration, that the church of *England* must be absolutely ruined, if this *Petition* should meet with success.

Undoubtedly it was in the power of Dr. *Tucker's* correspondent, to grant him whatever he chose to demand. It is a point of friendship to indulge an old acquaintance in some small reveries, which other people may think a little unreasonable. But as the correspondent has not told us his mind upon this subject, it is possible he may be as firmly persuaded

persuaded of the *evil tendency* of the Dean's principles, as the Dean pretends to be of his. Nor should I be much surprised to find, that is really the case.

The first of these two *Postulata* is thus worded. "All societies must have some *common centre of union*, and be governed by some rule, either *expressed or implied*, either *written or traditional*."

It is very rare to find a general proposition advanced by an adroit writer of controversy, which is free from ambiguous or equivocal terms. What is here meant by *a common centre of union*? Does it stand for the *ultimate end*, for which *all Societies* are formed, or does it mean, the *bond of union*, or the *specific compact* by which the several members of particular societies are attached to their respective bodies? or is it the same thing with the *rule* by which societies are governed?—Perhaps the Dean's second Postulatum may clear up this matter, *viz.*

"Those persons who are admitted members of *such societies*, and more especially those who propose themselves to be candidates for *offices* and *honourable distinctions* in the same, are to be supposed to approve of this rule *in the main*, and this *centre of union*, *whatever it may happen to be*."

No.—We are driven to our conjectures again. What does the Dean mean by *such societies*? He cannot mean *such societies*, as *all societies*, for *all societies* have not these *honourable distinctions* to bestow, nor are *offices* and *honourable distinctions*, the *ultimate end*, or the *specific bond of union*, or the *rule of Government* in *all societies*.

To explain this mystery then, we must go back to the Dean's title-page, and there we find, that he is writing, *An Apology for the present Church of England, as by law established.*

Things begin now to brighten up. We are to understand, that the present church of *England*, as by law established, is one of the *such* societies here intended, and the Church of *England*, not as consisting of *Pastors and People*, but as wholly composed of *Clerks*, or *clerical persons*, whose *common centre of union*, considered as the *ultimate end* of her incorporation, are *offices* and *honourable distinctions*, and whose *common centre of union*, considered as the *specific compact* upon which admittance is to be gained into the society, is *Subscription* to the *Thirty-nine Articles of religion*.

In *such* society, the lay part of the people, as such, have neither part nor lot. They are not admitted to be candidates for *offices* or *honourable distinctions* in it, nor are they required to approve of the *common centre of union* of *such* society, by their *Subscription*.

Now this, I apprehend, the Petitioners will think a very unreasonable *Postulatum*. They will be apt to say, that the account the Dean gives here of *his* Church of *England*, is very different from the account that *their* Church of *England* gives of herself.

The Dean's forecast in keeping *his* particular society out of fight as long as he could, was not *needless*. He might have been asked *prematurely*, whether the Rule by which this *his* *such* society is governed, is *expressed* or *implied*, *written* or *traditionary*. Much may depend upon these circumstances. A Rule adopted by way of *implication*, may be founded in a wicked combination of interested interpreters. A Rule adopted from *tradition*, might originate in the whim of some crazy bigot, or dreaming visionary in the midnight of monkery. It behoved the Dean however, to be explicit on this head, at his setting out, the rather, as the Church of *England*, with which the Petitioners pretend to be

be concerned, gives, as I said, a very different account of herself, *viz.*

" The visible church of Christ, is a congregation of faithful men, in the which, the *pure word of God* is preached, " and the sacraments be duly administred, in all those " things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

In this definition, the laity are comprehended as well as the clergy. If, with respect to such a congregation, the abstract term, *a centre of union*, has any meaning, it must have immediate relation to this *preaching of the pure word of God*, and the *due administration of the sacraments*, and in these the laity have an important interest. It is in these *fundamentals*, that the present *Church of England*, *as by law established*, grounds her claim of being *a visible church of Christ*; and whatever the society which excludes them may be besides, it can have no title to *that* denomination.

A morose logician might therefore say, that the Dean, in this second *Postulatum*, begs the very thing in question between him and the Petitioners. But I am of opinion, his Reverence may, with a little management, save his *Postulatum* and his *Orthodoxy* too, by the limiting words *in the main*. He approves the *centre of union* of the Church of England *in the main*, but reserves to himself the liberty of dissenting from the first paragraph of this *Nineteenth Article*, as it takes in *incompetent* and *unqualified* members, and refers to *a rule of government*, wherein no mention is made of those *honourable distinctions*.

Some have imagined, that the worthy Dean, misled by his meditations on *trade*, had conceived, that the *centre of union* in the Church of England, might be similar to the *centre of union* in the *East-India Company*; and that full of that idea, he had overlooked the claim of the church, to be

be a visible church of Christ under the direction of the pure word of God.

I own I am not of that opinion. I am persuaded he was well aware of that circumstance ; and knowing that others had gone before him in this warfare, who had made concessions at their entrance, which had set them fast in their progress, he was determined to avoid that inconvenience at all events.

The late *Regius-Professor* of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, had as much occasion for an *analogical similitude* between the Church of England, and *all or any* other societies, as the Dean of Gloucester. But unfortunately he was too late with his *Postulatum*. He had unwarily granted, that the Church he was *vindicating*, is “ a society instituted “ by Christ himself, of which Christ is the head ; and that “ this church included in it *all those* who profess to believe “ in his name, and have been received by baptism into “ the number of his disciples.” The learned Professor had moreover admitted, “ the end and purpose for which *this* “ society was instituted, to be, to lead men to eternal life by “ the preservation and advancement of true religion.”

Now it is very evident, that *this* society, cannot be *such* society as *all* societies, or as *any other* society, either in its *centre of union* (whatever the Dean may mean by that vague and equivocal term) or in its *rule of government*. Accordingly when the Professor came to take refuge in the analogy *this* society bore to all other societies, he found the door was shut against him, and, to give him his due praise, he was too honest to force it open by expedients, which his own principles forbade him to apply.

The Dean, I think, could hardly avoid seeing, that to hazard such a concession, might lose him all the advantages against

against the Petitioners, which he proposed to himself, in drawing his conclusions.

But you will say, why might he not have grounded his *Postulatum* on the system of *Alliance*, projected some years ago by an *honourably distinguished* Personage, to whom the Dean owes an especial respect on account of his particular situation.

I will tell you why. That system had allowed a *saving* of certain privileges to the church of Christ, which, when they came to be examined, made it questionable whether the Governors of a Christian church, had any powers delegated by Christ to enter into such *Alliance*? In discussing this question, it appeared, the written word was silent concerning such powers. In claiming them therefore as *official* powers, the claimants ran the hazard of passing for *usurers*. In claiming them as the grants of the people, they might be deemed *impostors*, the people having confessedly no such powers to grant.

This scheme of *Alliance* then, would answer the Dean's purpose, as little as Dr. Rutherford's method of vindication. And as to the article of *due respect*, experience has shewn, that, however the leaders of the *clerical society* may agree *in the main centre of union*, in defence of *offices*, *honourable distinctions*, and the appurtenances thereof, they have not always any greater deference for each others theological opinions, than for those of the Petitioners.

Dr. Tucker accordingly, to avoid the mistakes of his predecessors, contrives a society purely *clerical*, with which the Laity have no right to interfere, not even with the magistrate at their head, (except perhaps in certain cases where *de facto* the magistrate has *honourable distinctions* to bestow). And this being granted as a *Postulatum*, the consequence flows

flows of itself, without the pains of a formal deduction, *viz.* To admit those into *such* society, who do not approve of the *centre of union*, *whatever it may happen to be*, and *rule of government*, at least *in the main*, would be to overturn the society from its very foundation.

That the Dean's *such* society, for which he apologises, is a merely *clerical* one, exclusive of any *lay-members*, will still more plainly appear from what his Reverence immediately *infers*.

"From both which postulata," says our ingenious Apologist, "I am *led to infer*, that the more important the ends and uses of any society are supposed to be, the sooner, "generally speaking, will such an institution arrive at acquisitions of *temporal possessions*."

But why, *any* society? Is the Dean apologising for *any* society but *one*? And why not, *such* society, the term in his *Postulatum*? We have it indeed in the end of the inference, *such an institution*;—that is to say, such an institution as the *such* society meant in the two *Postulata*; which we now find to be the Church of England, as by law established.

Now, to whom do these temporal possessions belong, when they *are* acquired? Evidently to the clergy as such, and exclusive of every lay-man in the kingdom as such, none of whom, excepting a few of their own servants, are allowed to bear any of the offices, partake of any of the *honourable distinctions* mentioned in the *Postulatum*, or touch a penny-worth of the temporal possessions thus acquired, nor consequently obliged (which indeed is but equitable) to approve by subscription, *the centre of union*, which holds this mysterious society together.

The reader undoubtedly will think with me, that a society so privileged, distinguished, and endowed, should have some

some very important ends and uses indeed. A consideration which will lead us to contemplate a little the origin of this importance, and of these advantages *exclusively* appropriated to it. The Dean can have no objection to an inquiry, which is so naturally suggested by his own *inference*.

Generally speaking, (to borrow a little of the Dean's prudential caution) when the *clerical society* first acquired these temporal possessions, the members of it were supposed to have among them, a complete power of opening Heaven or Hell at their pleasure. They pretended to carry the keys at their girdles, and to let in or shut out whomsoever they thought good. The *ostensible* importance, ends, and uses of this institution, consisted in the *exercise of this power*; the *real* importance, ends, and uses of it, were *dominion over the consciences*, and by that means *free access* to the *purses* of the poor deluded people.

"Divers persons," says the Dean, "either in their life-time, or at their decease, WILL think it expedient out of a principle of zeal, of emulation, or perhaps from less laudable motives, to subscribe sums of money, or to give lands, or leave legacies for the support and encouragement of such an important institution."

It is a pretty long stride to pass from the times when this *such institution soonest arrived at the acquisition* of these temporal possessions, to the present age. And supposing the *importance* of this *such institution* to have been the same from the days of *Constantine*, it will be no pleasing contemplation to a lover of his country, that this important institution is still arriving at farther acquisitions of temporal possessions, by the weakness of divers persons who *will* think it expedient to support and encourage it.

Could the Dean hope, in a period which affords so many
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writers and readers of history, to cover his march, by throwing a veil over a course of twelve or fifteen hundred years? The honest truth is, that all this *zeal* and *emulation*, for at least two thirds of the time, has been, without a *perhaps*, a frank merchandise, so much *salvation*, for so much *money*. The superstitious devotee stipulated so many *masses*, *obits*, *requiems*, so many years of *indulgence* or *refrigeration*, for such a sum of money, or so many acres of land, as the covenanting parties could agree for. Where the more laudable motive, *superstition*, (called here, politely enough, *zeal* and *emulation*) did not rise to a sufficient height, or where the purchaser was a little hard-fisted, in driving the bargain, some *useful* and *important* member of the society was employed to procure *visions*, *miracles*, *ghosts*, and other scenical exhibitions, to terrify the wavering patient into the necessity of opening his purse, or sealing the parchment.

Some of these *less laudable motives*, are still upon record.
 " It happened," says Father *Paul*, " when first the church
 " was allowed to acquire real estates, that some religious
 " persons, entertaining an opinion, that it was a service to
 " God, to disinherit the children and heirs of families, in
 " order to give their estates to the church, omitted no arti-
 " fice to persuade widows, maids, and other easy people,
 " ready to receive any impressions, to deprive their own fa-
 " milies, and make the church their heirs. And this dis-
 " temper grew to such an height, that the Prince was obli-
 " ged to provide against it.—*Charlemaign* made a law to
 " forbid churches to receive any gifts which disinherit chil-
 " dren or kindred *."

It was not however this, or twenty such laws, that could

* On Eccles. Benefices, chap. vi.

put a stop to these *less laudable methods* of providing *temporal possessions* for the *clerical society*; and Dean Tucker frankly acknowledges it is not yet.

"Nor," says he, "is it in the power of the civil magistrate, even where he disapproves of these benefactions, totally to prevent them." Which, I apprehend, is nearly the same thing as to exclude the civil magistrate from any concern with the clerical society. Against his intermeddling in matters merely *spiritual*, the society is sufficiently guarded. Take away his power of controlling or regulating their temporal acquisitions, and he is completely ousted of all authority with respect to this *sacred order*. Is not this fairly to confess, that superstition, and the knavery and avarice by which it is encouraged and supported, will, in *every age*, be too hard for the wisest and most righteous ordinances of civil government? It had been indeed to no purpose to dissemble it, after the repeated experience we have had of the dexterity of the *clerical society* in evading the several *Mortmain* laws enacted to restrain them in the use of these less laudable motives *.

It would however be neither just nor candid to deny, that the church, considered in a less exceptionable light, acquired many temporal possessions (as many perhaps as would have supplied all the real necessities, and have answered all the real *importances* of a truly Christian church) in a *more reputable* way, and upon *more laudable* motives. But I must make this a *Postulatum* in my turn; for in my present penury of records, I cannot prove it without sending the reader to Dr Newton's *Pluralities indefensible*, and there are many

* See Chambers's Dict. under the word *Mortmain*.

respectable men among Dean *Tucker's* clients, whom I would not willingly offend.

With the Dean himself I shall not stand upon the like ceremony, as I cannot, in any reason, grant him his second Postulatum while it is loaded with those *honourable distinctions*, which seem to him to be so especial a portion of the church for which he is apologising.

I am therefore under a necessity of exhibiting another quotation from Father *Paul*, on which Dr *Newton* seems to have laid some stress.

“ Ecclesiastical degrees were not established at their institution, on the foot of dignities, pre-eminentes, recompenses, or honours, as they are at this day, and have been for many ages, but upon that of *ministries* and *offices*; to which St Paul gives the name of *Labours*, in the same sense as Jesus Christ hath called those who were therewith invested, *Labourers*. They who were appointed to the offices, were obliged to discharge them in their own persons; nor, abstaining themselves from them, could, with justice, retain either the title or the profits of them. It is but since the year *seven hundred*, that in the *Western* church, ecclesiastical ministries changed their nature, and became degrees of dignity and honour, and were bestowed as recompenses of services.”

Now if the *offices* themselves stood upon this footing before the year *seven hundred*, and if making the *labour* inseparable from the *office*, was derived from the sense of *Jesus Christ*, and *St Paul*, whose authority the Church of Eng-

* *Newton*, p. 71, from *Hist. Conc. Trid.* b. ii. p. 203, of *Brent's* translation, 1676; where the passage is in much stronger terms, than in *Courayer's* which *Newton* cites.

land herself acknowledges to be superior to that of the *Western church*, I should think that something of the *labour*, as well as of the *office* and *honourable distinction* might be admitted into the Dean's *centre of union*, whatever it means. Candidates indeed for laborious offices, with no rewards or distinctions either in hand, or in prospect, but such as bore a just proportion to the labour, would not, I fear, be very numerous, a circumstance which might probably contract the *circumference* of the union, whatever should become of the *centre* of it.

But perhaps some blundering copist, or designing translator, might have played some tricks with that copy of the record from which Father *Paul* collected the sense of Jesus and his Apostle; and in that case, this *fallibility in the descent*, would make it of little authority, and this being shewn by the Dean to be the case, I do not see why his Reverence might not turn his *inference* into a *third Postulatum*, as thus :

" Such society must have a right, arising from the important ends and uses of its institution, to acquire temporal possessions, by every possible means, and to retain and appropriate them to such services as may best answer the interests and purposes of such society, without any regard to the rules of civil justice, or permitting the magistrate to interfere either with the acquisition or the distribution of them." And then the way would be completely levelled for the introduction of the Dean's conclusion, viz. " Therefore such society might form such *centre of union*, and establish such *rules of government*, and such *conditions of admission*, as their discretion should find requisite.

But, after all, I am apprehensive, that the Petitioners may object to the Dean's whole system, and say, " What is all this

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" to us ? we do not admit this picture to be a faithful resemblance of that church of England of which we are members, even as it is by law established. If the law has established this *exclusive clerical society*, under the name of the church of *England*, it is more than we know, and what, for the honour of the law as well as the church, we are unwilling to suppose.

" We acknowledge," might they say, " that there have been men, even from the early days of the Protestant church of *England*, who have endeavoured to turn her into a *mere clerical society*, and who, by a coincidence of favourable circumstances, may have so far succeeded in the attempt, as to procure some laws for her discipline and government, not very consistent with her subjection to the laws of Christ. But thanks be to God, they have not so far prevailed as to suppress the church of *England's* *testimony of herself*, that she is a *visible church of Christ*, and under the controll of his *written word*. And as this *testimony* is as firmly established by law, as any other circumstance of her constitution, and is the original ground-work of her reformation from Popery, every thing contrary to it, however established by human authority, must be considered as a *corruption* of the very same nature as those Popish assuments, whose obstruction to the *free course of the word of God*, not only gave occasion, but afforded a complete justification of the church of *England* in separating from the church of *Rome*. Of these corruptions, and of these only, we desire a reformation of the legislature. And whoever, like the angry Dean of *Glocester*, affirms, that the church of *England* would be ruined by such reformation, must unavoidably be driven, first or last, to acknowledge, that the church of *England* is not

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" a visible church of Christ ; it being impossible that the *pure word of God* should be preached, where the doctrines and commandments of men, are intermixed with it, and stand, by the means of what is called an *establishment*, on the same level with it."

Many readers of Dean Tucker's pamphlet, considering the cogency of this plea, and the perspicuity of the argument on which it is founded, have supposed, that the Dean, having turned his thoughts so incessantly to secular commerce, had mistaken the question, and applied his Apology to a wrong object, *viz.* the *temporal emoluments*, instead of the *evangelical privileges* of the church of *England*.

I will not say but this might be the case in part. But undoubtedly, *in the main*, he was well aware of this plea of the Petitioners, and accordingly addresses himself to answer it, and having gone on with great fluency, till he found this block of the scriptures in his passage, he looks about him for a way to escape, and finding no opening to the right hand or the left, he boldly strikes into the high *Roman road*, and attacks the *infallibility* of the scriptures, on the pretence of their being transmitted to us through the hands of *fallible* copists, *fallible* printers, and *fallible* translators, and all these *fallibilities* established by *fallible* authority.

What is the consequence ? Will it follow, that his *creeds* and *confessions* are *infallible* ? By no means ; the Dean is too modest to assert it : but he will shew you, that *one* sort of *fallibility* is as good as *another*, and that you may make as good a shift with *his*, and with your *own*.

His state of the case is this. " The scriptures are *infallible* in their *source*, but *fallible* in their *descent*. *Creeds* are *fallible both in their source, and in their descent* *." Surely

* *See note to another ed. p. 23,*

he should have said, at least his *Apology* required he should say, “*Creeds* are *fallible* in their *source*, but *infallible* in their “*descent*.” The antithesis had then been complete, and the wavering christian would have had some ground to debate with himself where to fix his choice, and, by a little of the Dean’s rhetoric, might have been brought to allow, that the *infallibility* in the *descent*, or in other words, the *infallibility* of the *conveyance*, (viz. the *clerical Society*) would be sufficient to cure all defects in the *source*.

But by allowing that *Creeds* are *fallible* in *both* respects, and the *Scriptures* only in *one*, and adding, that “it is every “man’s duty to make the best of his condition,” he has fairly given up the cause to the Petitioners. Half the common sense of a plough-boy will readily determine, that he *makes better* of his condition, and consequently *does his duty better* who adheres to that system where he has but *one* chance of being deceived, than he who espouses that were *he has two*.

O Domus antiqua, quam dispari dominaris Domino !

Thou hoary Vicar of the church on seven hills, thou genuine founder and head of this *clerical society*, how awkwardly do thy rivals, and would-be successors, manage thy tools, and ape thine heroic exploits ! even like children mimicking the grandeur of thy St Peter’s in models of clay !

It seems to be the Dean’s opinion, that if the Petitioners have any scruples concerning the established *centre of union*, they ought to repair to some other society, where the yoke is not so galling, and especially as there is so ample a toleration for Protestant dissenters of different denominations ; and he would infer from their remaining in the church, with a manifest disapprobation of the conditions of clerical commu-

communion, that they only want to avail themselves of the church's emoluments at all events, which it seems, are better secured in an established, than in a tolerated society.

That is to say, the Petitioners desire to earn the wages of the church, but to earn them with a good conscience. And where is the harm of this? Does Dr. *Tucker* desire to hold his Deanry on any other terms? Does he not desire to have an *internal* sanction for holding it, as well as a merely *legal* one? I cannot tell, let us try him by his own speculations.

The Doctor hath given it under his hand, that the *Athanasian* creed may be proved by most certain warrants of scripture, and yet the Petitioners have his consent to part with it. His *ostensible* reason is, that it is *superfluous*.—The passage is remarkable, and you shall have it in his own words.

" As to the *Athanasian* creed, it is really *superfluous* in our
 " present service; because the very same doctrine is as *strongly*,
 " though not as scholastically maintained in the *Nicene* creed,
 " the *Litany*, and in many other parts of our public of-
 " fices."

I should be very glad to have the opinion of Mr. *Toplady*, or Mr. *Madan*, or even of Dr. *Halifax* on this proposition. So far as my own understanding reaches, I am obliged absolutely to deny the fact. Indeed if common language is to be interpreted by common sense, it is impossible to be true.

The late worthy Bishop of *Clogher* (after having shewn from *Socrates* the ecclesiastical Historian, that *υνικα* and *ὑποστασις* were, with the *Nicene* Fathers, synonymous terms) could not help saying, " it is something odd to have these two creeds (the *Athanasian* and the *Nicene*) established in the same church, in one of which, those are declared to be accursed, who deny the Son to be of the same *Uia* or

" *Hypostasis* with the Father ; and in the other it is declared,
 " they cannot be saved, who do not assert, that there is one
 " Hypostasis of the Father, and another of the Son, and
 " another of the Holy Ghost *."

It is true, this *curse* is not subjoined to the *Nicene* creed, as it is now used in our public service. Our present form is taken from the Popish offices, and not from *Socrates*; and the reason of omitting the *Anathema* at the end of it, is obvious : For it is in that formula of execration, that the *ovōia* and *ἀπειροτης* are used as synonymous terms. If any dextrous copist had but contrived to drop the *Hypostasis* in the *descent* of this creed, the *Anathema* would probably have been added to it in the Roman Ritual, and consequently in our communion service, and then we should have been cursed in the *Nicene* creed, for believing what we are cursed in the *Athanasian* for *not* believing. Another material difference between these two creeds, shall be noted presently.

" And as the *damnatory clauses*," the Dean goes on, " are
 " *seldom rightly understood*, and therefore too liable to give
 " offence, it were to be wished that the whole was omitted."—Here I appeal again to the common sense of every man in the kingdom, who understands the following sentence. *If you rob upon the King's highway, you shall be hanged.*

" Indeed," continues the Dean, " there is another weighty
 " reason for leaving this creed out of our present forms of
 " public worship, which, as it is *perfectly sound and orthodox*,
 " ought to be distinctly mentioned. The reason I mean is
 " this: one principal part of the controversy, which gave
 " birth to the *Athanasian* creed, is now generally, and very

* *Essay on Spirit*, p. 146, Sect. cxvi.
 " happily

" happily forgot, viz. the errors of *Sabellius*;—there being
 " few at this day that ever heard of his name, and fewer
 " still who have a clear conception of his singular notions
 " and opinions."

It were happy for the perfectly sound and orthodox, if this were really the case. But there are other *Apologetic* writers in the world, besides the worthy Dean of *Glocester*. There is in print, *An Apology* for one *Benjamin Ben Mordecai*, setting forth the reasons for his conversion from the *Jewish* to the *Christian* religion. This honest and sensible *Hebrew*, appears to have as clear a conception of the notions and opinions of *Sabellius*, as the Dean of *Glocester* himself, and from him we learn, that they are not singular. From his account it appears that they have been the notions and opinions of certain learned clerks of the church of *England*, who have hitherto been esteemed, not only perfectly sound and orthodox themselves, but perfectly sound and orthodox interpreters of the *Athanasian* creed.

" I shall now consider," says this learned *Israelite*, " the doctrine of the *Trinity*, as laid down by Dr. *Waterland*, and several other modern writers, who, in many particulars, differ from one another; all of them from the most ancient fathers, and especially from *ATHANASIUS*; and yet affect, one and all, to defend their notions under the authority of HIS name *."

Having shewn this at some length, he scruples not to call these writers, with *Waterland* at their head, *Pseudo-Athanasians*, and proves to the satisfaction of every capable reader, that in answering the objections of those they call heretics and heterodox, they espouse by turns, the several errors

of Socinus, the *Tritheists*, and the *Sabellians**, “ and thus,” says he, “ they absolve themselves from one heresy, by professing another, which is quite opposite to it ; and holding two or more doctrines at the same time, which are absolutely contradictory to each other.”

Now, if there are none of these contradictions in the *Athanasian creed* (as we are sure there are none in the *most certain warrants of scripture*, by which the Article says, it may be proved,) the Dean of *Glocester*’s reason for omitting it will be found not so *perfectly sound and orthodox* as he would pretend. For if the Doctors *Pearson*, *Cave*, *Bull*, *Waterland*, &c. &c. are proved to be *Sabellians*, though it be only *occasionally*, the Dean can give no *orthodox* reason, why they should not fall under the reproof of the *Athanasian creed*, as well as *Sabellius* himself †.

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* P. 43—45.

† That the Dean may not be too much startled at this unexpected accusation of Dr. *Waterland*, we present him with the following anecdote, which may possibly have lurked hitherto in a corner where he would not look for it. In the year 1749, appeared *Pope’s DUNCIAD*, published by Mr. *Warburton*, the reputed author of the *Notes*. The commentator, after acting as *Second* to Mr. *Pope*, in this poetical *Bear-garden*, concludes his operations with a taste of his theology, to the purport following. Having observed, that “ certain scandalous contentions, for modes of faith, have violated christian charity, and dishonoured sacred scripture,” he proceeds to say,—“ As particularly the mischievous squabble between *Waterland* and *Jackson*, on a point confessedly above reason, and amongst those adorable mysteries, which it is the honour of our religion to find unfathomable. In this, by the weight of answers and replies, redoubled upon one another without mercy, they made so profound a progress, that the One proved, nothing hindered in *Nature*, but that the Son might have been the Father, and the other that nothing hindered in grace, but that the Son may be a mere creature. In a word, they made all things disputable but their own dullness, and this they left unquestioned; and it was the only thing they did leave, of which their readers could be certain.” The remarkable in this passage, are these, 1. It is for the honour of this commentator’s religion, that there are

The Dean tells us, " This creed cannot be properly understood, till these tenets, by being previously known, are contrasted with their opposite extremes."

One would think that this might *properly* enough be brought about, by *contrasting* each proposition with its contradictory one.—But the Dean's reason — ;

" For all these striking antitheses, which to *ignorant* and " *prejudiced* minds, appear like so many paradoxes or contradictions, will be found to be nothing more, *when truly understood*, than so many cautions and preservatives " against falling into the errors of *Sabellius* on one side, or " those of *Arius* on the other."

Aye, there's the difficulty. *When truly understood*,—but when will that be, if the writer cited in the margin, *truly* says, that the mystery to which these *striking antitheses* relate, is *unfathomable*? But, be that as it may, we have shewn from honest *Ben Mordecai*, that men to whom the Dean himself must not impute either *ignorance* or *prejudice*, are as prone to the heresy of *Sabellius*, as to that of *Arius*. And if we are not to fix our orthodoxy by the standards of

are *mysteries* in it, which he finds *unfathomable*. 2. As the *Athanasian* creed may possibly be of this *unfathomable* depth, and at the same time a part of this commentator's religious system, it may be dishonourable to the commentator's religion, and consequently, not *perfectly sound and orthodox*, to leave this creed out of our present forms of public worship, as the Dean proposes. 3. Dr. *Waterland* was, with respect to the *divine nature*; a frank *Sabellian*.—But this squabble, concerning the Trinity, was not the only *mischievous* thing in which these disputants were concerned, that scandalised the pious commentator. *Waterland* could not away with the *Divine Legation*, &c. at any rate. [See Middleton's *Misc. Tracts*, 1752, p. 496.] and *Jackson* was not altogether unsuccessful in some printed attacks upon it. This probably intitled these two writers to a place in the *Dunciad*. Otherwise there have been *contentions* as *scandalous*, and *squabbles* as *mischievous* on the doctrine of the Trinity, between other Divines of the commentator's acquaintance.

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such men as *Pearson*, *Bull*, and *Waterland*, we must, I am afraid, go a little farther to get rid of these apparent paradoxes and contradictions, than the Dean's *ipse dixit*.

Let us however go on with him. "Now as the *Nicene* creed was particularly intended as an antidote against *Arianism* — and as *Sabellianism* is *utterly unknown to our common congregations*, reason good it seems to be, that a Creed, which was intended to guard against *bath extremes* at the same time, and by the same context, ought to be laid aside when there is only *one* of these errors now remaining — especially as that *one* is already as well guarded against as human prudence can devise." p. 59.

I am afraid this reason will prove too much, *viz.* that the *Nicene* creed should be dismissed along with the *Athanasian*. For where is the *common congregation*, that knows more of the *Arian* than the *Sabellian* errors? On the other hand, we can say something from our own experience, and will not be afraid to appeal to that of others, that it is impossible to study the *Arian* controversy so as competently to understand it, without getting at the same time a pretty clear conception of the *Sabellian* tenets. The Dean himself calls them *the two extremes*, and we have seen a thousand times how difficult it is to steer between the two, so as to avoid the one, without being intangled in the other.

The case appears from Ecclesiastical History, to have been this. *Noetus* and *Praxeas*, from whom *Sabellius* derived his notions, were called *Monarchists* and *Patropassians*, on account of their holding the identity of the *ὑπόντα* or *ὑποστάτης* of the Father and the Son, without any distinction of what has been since called *Personality*. The *Noetians* and the *Sabellians* after them, said, the Divine Monarchy could only be preserved

preserved upon their hypothesis, and insisted, that the doctrine of their adversaries introduced *two or more Gods*.

Origen, Eusebius of Cæsarea, Tertullian, and they in general who are called the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, in opposing these Heretics, were apt, in distinguishing between the *Hypostasis* of the Father and the Son, to run into the error of those who were afterwards called *Arians* *, and this is the reason why these Fathers are so often appealed to by those who espouse the *Arian* scheme, even to this hour.

The Council of *Nice* pretended to adjust these matters, and the orthodox of the present times abide by their determination, which however both the *Nicene*, and our *English Fathers* have explained so awkwardly, as to expose themselves over and over to the reproach of *Sabellianism*. And of this they have never been able to acquit themselves, but by deferring their *explanations* of the *Nicene* doctrine, and taking refuge in the *Athanasian*, from which likewise they have been driven in their turn, as may be seen in the *Apology* of *Ben Mordecai* above mentioned. The result then is, that if you take away the *Athanasian* creed, you leave an opening for an influx of *Sabellians*; as, it seems, the *Arians* are to be dealt with on no other ground. So inexpedient is the Dean's proposal to dismiss this *orthodox* Confession of Faith.

The Dean concludes this *manceuvre*, by saying, “ For undoubted fact it is, that *that Arian*, whose conscience can digest the *Nicene* creed, will make no scruples at swallowing the *Athanasian*.”

* Hinc *Apologista Origenis*, apud *Photium*, ingenue fatetur eundem, [Origenem] *Sabellii* hæresi semet opponentem, ita in contrarium abreptum fuisse, ut *Arianico* morbo correptus videretur. *Whitby Disq. Mod. Appendix*, p. 181. See that whole *Appendix*, from which the account above is chiefly taken.

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And where is the wonder of that? For it is undoubted fact, that the *Arian* who can do these feats, would swallow the *Trent* Catechism, or the *Shastah* of the *Perfians*, with perfect safety to his organs of deglutition, whatever violence he might do to his digestive faculty.

But I believe the *fact* is not so *undoubted* as the Dean's confidence represents it. There are *Arians* who think the *τον ἐκ του πατρος γεννηθεὶα πρὸ πατέρων αἰώνων*, of the Nicene Creed sufficiently consistent with their leading tenet, *ην πότε, οὐτε οὐαίος εἰναι*, to allow them to subscribe to the said creed, but who would on no account be prevailed upon to acknowledge the *proper eternity* of the Son taught in the *Athanasian*, where *eternity* is ascribed to the *Son* and *Holy Spirit*, *in common* with the Father.

I should be loth to think that the Dean says all this without book, and without having examined into the present state of *Sabellianism*, as exhibited in the writings of our most approved controversial Divines. But if I must allow, that he has a *clear conception* of this heresy, he must excuse me, if, considering upon what precarious premisses he hath rested his conclusion, I conjecture, that he has some *more substantial reasons*, not so *perfectly sound and orthodox*, for removing the *Athanasian* creed, than he chuses to produce in public.

Be that to himself, and let us proceed to another instance. In the 56th page of his pamphlet, he mentions some doctrines established in our thirty-nine Articles, concerning *Merit*, *Justification*, and some other points, in the discussing of which, he is not pleased either with the *Papists* or the *Protestants*. "The Papists," he says, "reasoned *dangerously*, and the Protestants *weakly*, about religious Merit, and "though the Protestants truly understood the general grounds of our *justification* before God, yet they express-

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" ed themselves so *unhappily* and *incautiously*, as to give some
" advantage to their adversaries."

Did not the Dean find some of this *weak reasoning*, this *unhappy* and *incautious expression*, concerning justification in the *thirty-nine Articles*? If he did not, why would he rather appeal for a corrective of this *weakness*, &c. to the second homily on salvation, than to the said Articles? But it seems, the learned Dean has " digested his sentiments on these subjects, into a *set treatise*, the materials of which he has had " by him many years."

Many years may carry us back to a time previous to his subscribing these articles for his Deanry, and these circumstances being laid together, there arises an high probability, that the Dean gave his assent and consent *ex animo*, to all and every of these articles, as *agreeable to the word of God*, even after he had discovered this *weakness of reasoning*, and this *unhappy* and *incautious expression*, in some of them; to which however, I am very unwilling to believe, the scriptures gave *just* occasion, even with all the *errors of Copists, Translators, and Printers*, in their most formidable arrangement.

But what then? Shall Dr. Tucker give up his Deanry, and go among the Dissenters? Shall he resign his *honourable distinctions*, and renounce the *centre of union*, which he so well approves in the main? Does he like every thing among the Dissenters so well, as to think their doctrines and modes of worship equivalent in value to such a sacrifice? Let him then be ingenuous, and fairly confess, that there may be some *Antipetitioners* not so perfectly easy under the bond of subscription, as they may pretend; and who would not like their *honourable, and lucrative distinctions* the worse, though the *Athanasian creed*, and the articles concerning merit and

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justification, were wholly laid aside. And let him not suppress another *undoubted fact*, to wit, that there is *another* sort of *Antipetitioners*, who, if the *Athanasian Creed* was dismissed, and the articles new modelled to the Dean of *Glocester's* taste, would think the church of *England* as completely undone, as if the prayer of the Petition were granted in its fullest extent.

Whether I am mistaken or not in supposing, the Dean's Treatise will not exactly tally with the Articles concerning *merit* and *justification*, time will shew. His disapprobation of the *Protestant* way of explanation on these heads, favours the supposition not a little. But let the supposition be ever so punctually verified by the event, the Dean will find a very substantial voucher for his *orthodoxy*, in the following *Apolo-gy*, which however I did not much expect from the quarter whence it came.

" The *Peace of Society* ought with us to be the first object, " and it is certainly better in a *political* sense, that a few
 " *Prevaricators* that make a *trade of religion*, should enter the
 " church, than that *Order and good Government* should be
 " *subverted*, a catastrophe in which the success of this Pe-
 " tition would certainly terminate *."

But why even a *few* Prevaricators ? The object of the Petition was, to prevent *any* prevarication ; and till the Catastrophe above mentioned is rendered probable by some evident indication, it may be asked, in what respect it would be *better* that these *few* Prevaricators and traders in religion should enter the church ? It is possible that, *few* as they might be, they may have large congregations under their pastoral care, perhaps whole dioceses ; and surely something should be ventured in a Christian country, that the religious

* See the *St. James's Chronicle*, February 25, 1772.

instruction and edification of Christian men may not be trusted to those, who, from their wicked principles, can neither be sincere teachers, nor worthy examples.

It is said, a little before, that "the whole body of the Clergy oppose the Petitioners, and treat their project, not only as *mad* and *frantic*, but as *irreligious* and *antichristian*."

We can hardly doubt but the speaker was informed, that this was the sense of the *whole body of the clergy*; he might however have justly questioned the truth of the deposition, from the very absurdity of the imputation. *Mad* and *frantic* persons are not properly called *irreligious* and *antichristian*. Both common sense, and the law of the land, forbid to ascribe any *immoralities* to the *insane* and the *lunatic*. I would therefore humbly propose to alter the passage by a slight, but very material correction; and, for the *whole body of the clergy*, would propose to substitute Dr. Tucker's *clerical Society*, who, according to his *postulatum* and *inference*, trade in religion *ex professo*. And even these must make their option, and declare, by which of these inconsistent accusations they will abide. They have had but indifferent luck in charging the Petitioners with *irreligion* and *antichristianism*. *Madness* and *frenzy* is the safer calumny to stick by. *Mad* and *frantic* they may be esteemed in endeavouring to exclude Prevaricators out of the church, in opposition to the *whole body of the clergy*. This however, it seems, is their project, and could not, in my opinion, be deemed either *mad* and *frantic*, or *irreligious* and *antichristian*, if the *Prevaricators who make a trade of religion*, were really *few*. In that case, some remedy might be found, without *subverting order and good government*. But — much comfort may the Dean of Gloucester and His *clerical society* have in their advocate.

Before Dr. *Tucker* obliges the public with his treatise on *merit and justification*, I would beg leave to give him a little sober advice.

ARNOLD POLENBURGH, in the year 1665, published the second volume of *Episcopius's* works, in the preface to which, he tells the Christian reader, that, "had not the Dutch war broke out, he should certainly have dedicated that book to the whole body of the clergy of the church of England;" for this reason among others, that, "by the providence of God, almost all the Prelates of that church held the same opinions, concerning *Predestination*, that *Episcopius* and the Remonstrants professed."—Upon which a very learned and ingenious writer, who was driven out of the church of England by the *Bartholomew-Act*, makes the following remark, "Whether *Polenburgh* be out in his account, is not for me to inquire, who have work enough to do at home; but it seems, even in this Gentleman's account, *all* our Bishops are not become *Episcopian*; and therefore preserve unity among themselves, by having their knowledge in these matters *unto themselves*. Now if it be found necessary to tolerate difference of judgments among the Bishops themselves, *in doctrines of so high concernment*, it may be worth the consideration of those who are in authority, whether they also may not be suffered to enjoy ecclesiastical preferment, who differ from their brethren only in some few points of discipline."

Our worthy Prelates (*one* excepted) have been, as far as I know, as wary as their predecessors, in declaring themselves on these points of *high concern*. That *one* is the Dean's immediate superior, and much circumspection will be requisite (so far as I can judge of the Dean's materials by the sample, compared

compared with the Prelate's performance) that he brings not forth what my Lords the Bishops chuse to have to themselves. That is to say, that he discovers not how far they may differ from their brother on the bench, concerning the *doctrine of grace* *; the Dean, I dare say, will desire to have it understood, that he delivers the sense of their Lordships on these matters, and his readers will certainly understand so too, should he, unavailed of *Polenburgh's* prudence, dedicate his labours to them.

Without borrowing the least spark of prophetic illumination from the *Foundery* or the *Lock-Hospital*, I venture to forebode, that fire and water are not more opposite in their several operations, than the Bishop's *present*, and the Dean's *future* system of *Merit, Justification, Atonement, &c.* And we are prepared already to expect, that iron and clay will incorporate with equal facility, as the doctrines of Messrs *Shirley, Pietas, Toplady, Madan, &c.* may be brought into agreement with either of them. Yet they are all *orthodox*,

* A shrewd and masterly writer hath lately shewn, upon very strong proof, that the Right Reverend Author of the book entitled, *The Doctrine of Grace*, hath, on the subject of *Atonement*, advanced a systematical paragraph, *diametrically opposite both to the scripture, common sense, and orthodoxy*. [See a Tract, intituled, *Confusion worse confounded, &c.* printed for *Hingeston*, 1772, p. 35.] It is not easy to treat of the doctrine of Christian *Justification*, without considering along with it that of Christian *Atonement*. The Dean therefore would do well previously to reconnoitre the ground on which he is about to engage, that he may not unwittingly turn his arms against the Colonel of his own regiment, and thereupon bring about a *catastrophe* much more deplorable than the *ideal* subversion of order and good government; that is to say, the *real* subversion of all consistency of interpretation on the doctrine of the Articles relating to those subjects. The Bishop is said to have contradicted a passage in the Communion-service, *ib.* If the Dean should do as much for one or more of the Articles, what a triumph would this be for the Petitioners? I have a right to expect the Dean of *Glocester's* thanks for this seasonable intimation.

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and with the utmost confidence, filiate their inconsistencies on the poor church of *England*, which must, it seems, answer for them all ; and in this presumption, they throw her *Articles* at each others head, with a clamour that drowns her still, mournful voice, representing, that *her* religion is founded in the *Bible only*, and has nothing to do with their fantastical notions, let them derive them from what other source they will.

In the midst of all this uproar, the Dean of *Glocester* on the one hand, and the Methodists on the other, tell her, that if she parts with these same articles, which furnish an eternal fund for this sort of brawling, she is utterly undone. And in full contemplation of this *undoubted fact*, to what does all this tragic grimace, of *Destruction, utter subversion of order and good government, &c.* made *special* to the views of the Petitioners, amount ? Even to the contents of ——— a tale

*Told by an Idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.*

For what would the true Protestant church of *England* lose by giving up these bones of contention, but a few rotten buttresses, in too mouldring a state to be of any essential use, and which, by the repeated operations of *propping* and *whitening*, serve only to conceal her real beauty, and to impair her strength.

The Dean however at length allows, that, “the great principles both of natural and revealed religion, might have been expressed in a more methodical manner, and with greater precision, than they are expressed in our thirty-nine Articles.” He allows too, “that some useful abbreviations might be made in our Liturgy, and some expressions altered and amended.”

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It is certainly a good work to mend things that are out of repair ; but it is a better work to replace them with things that will never want repairing ; and this, I apprehend, is the view and the desire of the Petitioners.

As this, however, is a concession which every one will not make *, it may seem at least to intitle the Dean of Gloucester to a little reputation on account of his *candor*, and he cannot complain that it has been denied him †.

But the Dean should have considered, that his present disputation is with men who scruple to subscribe, not particularly to the *thirty-nine* Articles, but to *any* Articles of *Faith*, of merely human composition, and whose agreement with scripture is doubtful and precarious. To such men, this concession, I imagine, will give little satisfaction, at least till the Dean has *proved*, what he here seems to take for granted, *viz.* that the *thirty-nine* Articles *express*, even in their present state, *the great principles both of natural and revealed religion* ; for all that he would propose by *his* alterations, is to give them a little *method* and *precision* in the article of expression, leaving the *principles* just as he finds them. And this probably would be as far as he would venture. For, should he be one of those *candid* and *impartial* men who are willing to lend an helping hand to the good work, and should he, by varying the method or the expression, happen to vary the complexion of the principle, an unlucky retrospect might be suggested to his former subscription, and bring on suspicions, that his private convictions did not

* It has been reported, that the Bishops, or some one of them, when consulted concerning the expediency of admitting this Petition into parliament, answered, *There is no occasion for any alterations.*

† Monthly Review for February, 1772, p. 158.

altogether

altogether tally with the *principles* of this public *Apology*, when it made its first appearance.

Now, all the world sees, it is in view of the hazard of adulterating or disguising the great principles of natural and revealed religion, in tampering thus with them by art and man's device, that the Petitioners propose to substitute the genuine scriptures in the room of all other Tests of the Article-kind. Can the Dean of Gloucester alone be ignorant of this? If he is not, can he be serious, can he be sincere, in calling upon the Petitioners for a *plan of their own*, after they have so often held out to him the pure word of GOD, as the only plan to which it is either safe or equitable for them to be bound, under a Protestant establishment?

And, for heaven's sake, what would the Dean do with this *Plan* of the Petitioners, if he had it? He tells you. He would scrutinize it; just, I suppose, as the Savoy-Bishops scrutinized Richard Baxter's Liturgy, by taking occasion from it, to ridicule and abuse both the plan and the author of it. The Petitioners may indeed fall into this snare if they will; but, *in vain*, says Solomon, *is the net spread in the sight of any bird*, and I hope the Gentlemen at the Feathers, are a little better acquainted with the man and his communication, than to be whistled into it by such an interested piper.

But does the Dean expect that his *own* plan would *not* be scrutinized? If the Petitioners should let it pass current, is he so little acquainted with the Gentlemen of the Tabernacle, as to hope that they would subscribe to his more *methodical* and *precise* Articles? And should they revolt, what amends would he make to his brethren, *Randolph*, *Balguy*, *Halifax*, *Powel*, *Harvest*, &c. who know they can no longer depend upon the aid of these *thorough-paced* champions,

champions, than the Articles are continued in their present circumstances, without the abatement of a single tittle? It is a thousand pities the Dean should have resigned the only *Postulatum* that could secure him from this *scrutinization*, viz. that all *Creeds*, *Articles*, and *Confessions*, which have the sanction of his *clerical society*, "are infallible in their descent."

I desire it may be understood, that these observations relate only to the thirty-nine Articles, and the doctrinal points in the Liturgy, to which the Petitioners are by law bound to subscribe. Subscription to these is the grievance of which they complain, and for which they desire to substitute subscription to the scriptures *only*. As to the *alterations* and *amendments* of our public offices in *other* matters, I cannot find they are inclined to intermeddle. These are called for by other persons. No doubt but the Petitioners are as sensible of these improprieties in the Liturgy, &c. as other people, and wish to see the church of *England* free from spots and blemishes, as ardently at least as Dr. *Tucker* himself. But in such things I think they have declared, they are willing to acquiesce in the wisdom of their superiors. They must acknowledge, that there are clergymen of great learning, accurate judgment, liberality and candour of mind, who have not joined them in their Petition, and who are every way equal to the task of reforming our public service even though they should except the Dean of *Glocester*, and those who oppose them on *his* principles, out of the number.

But now for the Dean's *drawback* upon his concessions, "But nevertheless," says this acute Apologist, "be it *duly* and *solemnly* observed, that IMPROVING and DESTROYING are very different things; and that the man, or set of men, who would gladly engage in the *one*, would not

" wish to appear to give countenance to the other. Therefore such men will chearfully submit to the present inconveniencies, *were they greater than they are*, rather than be " the coadjutors and fellow-labourers in such a *destructive design* as yours seems to be."

If I remember right, this Reverend Dean, once in his life, pleaded for the *Naturalization of foreign Protestants*, and afterwards for the *Naturalization of Jews*, both these, he insisted, would be considerable IMPROVEMENTS. I have now a pamphlet before me, wherein he was told, that these projects were DESTRUCTIVE of the constitution, particularly, of the church of *England*. Does he remember what answer he gave to this objection? Let him apply it to the case in hand, and the world will see, that he stands exactly in the same predicament with respect to the Petitioners, in which he exhibited his opponents at those several periods.

But wherein consists the *destructive* part of the design of the Petitioners? why, truly, in substituting *assent* and *consent*, to the *pure word of God*, instead of *assent* and *consent* to *Creeds, Confessions, and Articles*, " some of which are *superfluous*, others, *want method, precision and perspicuity in expressing the great principles both of natural and revealed religion*, and all of them *fallible both in their source and in their descent*."

Will the Dean venture to affirm, that this is the case with the *scriptures*? If he will not, what must be the consequence? A very obvious one, *viz.* that the substitution of these Creeds, Articles, &c. instead of the *pure word of God*, must of course be *destructive* to something of infinitely more value to the good old church of *England*, than a *merely clerical society*.

In the name of common sense, Mr. Dean, pick up your *concessions*

concessions, and put them in your budget as fast as you can. I should laugh at you for producing them, if I did not know, that a man, with a majority on his side, can never be ridiculed out of his grossest absurdities. I have another reason for giving you this advice. Take these *Creeds* and *Articles* in the state you have represented them, and it is questionable whether there is a thinking man in the kingdom sufficiently callous to subscribe them in the terms of the 36th canon, without *prevarication*.

I pass by the curious and orthodox supposition couched in the last period of this lamentable paragraph, that “it is better to submit to the present inconveniences, *were they greater than they are*,” (even, suppose, to the *inconveniences of Popery*) than to substitute a subscription to the scriptures only, in the room of our *Creeds and Articles*.” For surely any *inconveniences* are more eligible than *absolute destruction*.

The case of candidates for Degrees, &c. in our Universities, shall be spoken to presently; in the mean time, let us contemplate another of the Dean’s concessions.

— “More especially, let the Ministers of dissenting congregations, if they will chuse to apply, be heartily wished a good deliverance from the *burden* of our subscriptions.”

I wish this gracious indulgence to Dissenters, was not forced from the angry Dean in pure spite to the Petitioners. For why else, *more especially?* Speaking of persons commending graduates, either in Arts, Law, Physic, or *Music**¹, he

* The idea of requiring subscription to the thirty-nine articles from commencers in *Music*, is a cheerful one. It is pity the Petitioners should forget them in their application. “An organist,” says *La Roche*, “having declared, that if they would set the canons of *Dort* to music, he would play them upon the organs, but that he could not subscribe them, with a good conscience, was turned out of his place.” *Hist. Reform.* 563.

says, "there doth not appear any STRICT PROPRIETY IN THE REASON OF THINGS, for requiring *their* subscriptions."

Now, when we bring subscription to Articles of Faith or Doctrine in the church of *England*, to this Test of *strict propriety* and *the reason of things*, we must go a little deeper, I apprehend, than the *accidental* or *political* ordinances of an human establishment, even to the *principles* of a *Christian* and a *Protestant* church. When the church of *England* renounces these principles, as being no part of her *establishment*, we will cease to argue with the Dean on the *strict propriety* of his Apology *in the reason of things*. But if she has given the Dean of *Glocester* no commission to renounce them in her name, he must explain to us, how *strict propriety in the reason of things* operates with respect to subscriptions to human creeds and articles, more in favour of ministers of dissenting congregations, than in favour of minsters of *any Christian* and *Protestant* congregations whatever. What reason can the Dean give why Dissenters should be excused from this *burden*, which will not reach the case of the Petitioners*?

Will he tell them, that as the Dissenters do not aspire to the *honourable distinctions*, or the *temporal possessions* of the

* "The strict measures taken at the Restoration, were not approved by the famous Dr. *Whichcot*, but were thought by him to be much too severe, and the effects only of a strong Party-prejudice. *I plainly see*, said the Doctor, *what they would be at*, but *I shall disappoint them*. *I can my self, with a good conscience, conform, though others cannot, whom I greatly pity, heartily wishing them more liberty, AS REALLY DUE TO THEM BY THE LAWS OF NATURE, AND THOSE OF THE GOSPEL.*" Now if this Liberty was due to these honest men by these immutable laws, they were *most unjustly driven out of the church* for want of it. Will the Dean of *Glocester* condescend to inform us, why equal liberty is not, by the same laws, and in a case of the same kind, due to the Petitioners.

church,

church, it is not *fit or proper* they should bear the *burdens* of the church : and that *strict propriety in the reason of things* requires, that they only should bear the *burden* who are paid for it ?

So then ! OUR subscriptions are a *burden* ; and it might seem, after the Dean had dropped this *inauspicious* word, that he would have been so kind to have mentioned, by what, or whose authority, it is bound and laid upon our shoulders ?

" No matter, you are *paid* for bearing it." — Say you so, Mr Dean ? And do the *whole body of the clergy* really *make a trade of religion* ? Let us cease to wonder then, if the *trade* should fail, that the poor church of *England* must become a *Bankrupt*.

Unfortunate Apologist ! To what contempt and detestation would you expose your indulgent mother, *ridente Papista, nec dolente Atheo*, if your sophistical trumpery should pass for *her* genuine principles !

Let us proceed with the Dean's concession. Who that is acquainted with the valuable labours of *Pierce, Hallet, Forster, Taylor, Chandler, Dodderidge, Lowman, Lardner, &c. &c. &c.* would not wish with Dr. *Jortin*, — *Utinam essent nostri.*

It was the wish of such men as *Whichcot, Tillotson, Burnet, Tennison*, and above all, of that true Protestant Patriot, King *William*, with respect to their excellent predecessors, whose conformity should have been, and deserved to have been purchased, by removing every circumstance out of our public forms, which could possibly be a reasonable obstruction to it. And could the influence of these worthies of our *Establishment* have prevailed over the monkish and malicious bigotry of those times, it would have been effected. The men indeed, who gave the *ply* to those times, were wise enough in their generation. The admission of
such

such Conformists into the church, would either have sunk these opposers into insignificance, or have made their manners and principles odious to the whole world, when set in contrast with the free, generous spirit, and the pious and laborious deportment of a *Calamy*, or a *Howe*.

Why may we not presume, that there are at this hour, numbers of dissenting ministers, whose learning, abilities, and other valuable qualities, would do honour to *any* religious establishment; and that there are as few among them in proportion, who would be a disgrace to *any*, as are to be found in our own?

May I then have leave to solicit the worthy Dean's answer to the following queries? Does not the spirit of Christianity require, that room should be made in our establishment (considered as a *Christian* establishment) for these Fellow-labourers, who build upon the same foundation that we do, *the sufficiency of the scriptures to make us wise unto salvation*? and with whom, and with St. Paul, we ought to agree, that *other foundation can no man lay, than is laid, which is, Jesus Christ*? Would not such an accession of strength to the Protestant cause, as an ecclesiastical union with such valuable characters would produce, be desirable, even in a political view, by removing our establishment still farther from Popery? Would the Dean's *more methodical and precise* Articles, or the corrections he proposes in the Liturgy, bring about the happy reconciliation required? If they are calculated for this end, why is subscription to them called, with respect to ministers of dissenting congregations, a **BURDEN**? If not, would not the releasing these ministers from this *burden*, whilst it is bound about the necks of the established clergy, tend to make this reconciliation absolutely *impracticable*?

cable? And may not the Dean be justly suspected to have proposed this indulgence of dissenting ministers, with an especial view to this *impracticability* ?

The case at present with the dissenting ministers, with respect to conformity, is this. If they can get over a few objections to the *modes* of Church Government, and particularly to the article of *re-ordination*, they have a much less step to take towards the established Church, than it is to assent to certain *doctrinal propositions* contained in the Articles they are still obliged to subscribe. When they can get their own consent to undergo this piece of discipline, the rest is, in comparison, of much less consequence ; and accordingly several of them have conformed, by whose labours, the church, upon the whole, hath lost no credit, though some few, by striking into the high orthodox road at full speed, may have disgraced both the system they left, and that which they espoused.

The Dean's expedient would effectually shut this door, at least upon the worthiest and most conscientious part of them, by making their conformity more difficult and embarrassing than ever. No matter ; the more plenty there will be of *offices*, *honourable distinctions*, and *temporal possessions* for the *hereditary* children of the church. And as the case of subscription is now likely to be more generally, as well as better understood since the sixth of February, 1772, the Dean may indulge his genius in the probable prospect, that many of the youth designed for the church, may, upon a serious consideration of the *burden*, decline the *condition* annexed to her emoluments, and leave them to those who can swallow the bitter pill with less offence to their stomachs.

It is however, and must be to all true friends of christian liberty

liberty, a most grateful effect of the late controversy concerning subscriptions, that the dissenting clergy should be relieved from this injurious condition inserted in the very law which tolerates their worship, upon whatever principle the relief is forced from the politicians of the present day. But if they are intitled to *this indulgence* upon *political principles*, they are intitled to *more* upon *better principles*. If their ministry is equally effectual in making men good christians, and good subjects, as that of established clergymen, the public is, in proportion to their numbers, equally benefited by their labours, and ought in justice to confer upon them a *proportionable share* of the public profits. And if in this view an *incorporation* is necessary, reason, justice, and the gospel direct, that where in conscience they cannot come up to us, we should go down to them, while their demands are reasonable, and founded upon an evangelical doctrine which is *common to us both* *. If their ministry is *reprehensible*, and *noxious* to the *Christian* and the *subject*, every indulgence in their errors should be denied them, and their houses of public worship shut up.

* I am sorry to observe, that in the printed *Case* the Dissenters distributed to the Members of Parliament, they should give it as a *twelfth reason*, that, "The reasons for which subscription is deemed necessary under an *establishment*, do not extend to the case of a *Toleration*." Had this *reason* been penn'd by Dr. Tucker, I should not have marvelled; his *established* maxims are maxims of traffic, wherein *opinions* are *saleable*, as well as other things. But to hear doctrines of this kind preached in the same paper, where it is asserted, that, "The Liberty desired is *agreeable*, not only to the *rights of men and christians*, but to the *sentiments of the best writers*, to the *principles of sound policy*, and to the *spirit of the constitution*," looks as if, in the opinion of the Dissenters, the Petitioners of February 6, were neither *men* nor *christians*, and that the Dissenters *only* were intituled to be dealt with according to the *sentiments of the best writers*, *the principles of sound policy*, and *the spirit of the constitution*.

But,

But, leaving the Dean of *Glocester* a while to his own meditations, let us return to the terrors of the Politician.

" The success of this Petition would certainly terminate " in the subversion of order and good government."

Hardly so certainly as to verify this proposition upon the mere illustration of its own self-evidence. It was said of *Luther*, that he committed two errors in his way of promoting reformation. It was pretended, that he might have had better success, had he not touched the *Pontifical Tiara*, and the *bellies* of the *monks*, which, it seems, were the two grand hinges of *Order* and *good Government* in the church of *Rome*. The Petition, I apprehend, steers clear of all mistakes of the same kind; it leaves episcopacy in full possession of its legal powers, nor does it tend to diminish the revenue of the church to the value of six-pence. The Petition aims only at the restoration of *the pure word of God* to its proper authority in a province where even the *royal supremacy* seems tender of interfering. And if by such restoration, the *order* and *good government* of the church would be *subverted*, it will be impossible to persuade some people, that *more order*, and *better government* would not arise out of the ruins.

As I was at a considerable distance from a certain orator, whose sentiments are understood to regulate those of many other men, I might easily misapprehend him, but to me his expressions implied, that he meant to have taken his steps with respect to this Petition, as if it had been addressed to himself *alone*.

By turning over so many Law-books in the way of my profession, I have contracted a sort of disinclination to vest the whole legislative and executive power of this once great kingdom, in the hands of one man; and I cannot reconcile myself to that language, which goes upon a supposition, that

a Minister of State may, by his own power and influence, execute, as well as propose, what plans of *order* and *good government* shall seem expedient to his single wisdom.

But if a Gentleman in Office *will* affect the character of *Chief Magistrate*, it is for his credit to act the part *consistently*. If the Chief Magistrate (considered as having all *legislative* and *executive* powers in his hands) takes upon him to establish religion upon his own maxims of *public utility*, passing by all considerations of the *source* from which the nominal religion he would establish pretends to be derived, it must be a disparagement to his authority, and inconsistent with his plan, to admit of a *Toleration-law* for sects and dissents, in the least degree. He should adhere strictly to the literal sense of the text, *Compel them to come in*. It is the only text to which he ought to pay any regard. To admit pleas of *Conscience*, may be fatal to *order* and *good government*. There may be times and seasons when men of *Conscience* may become the majority, and rise up in a formidable body against the establishment. And indeed, such is the caprice of men's minds, when left to chuse their own religion, that there is no providing against such events, but by excluding all operations of *Conscience* from the environs of an establishment, by the severest laws that can be devised.

To give an instance from a case quoted on occasion of the affair under our consideration. Mention was made of the liberties taken with the doctrine of the *Trinity*, and taken with impunity, in open defiance "of an act of Parliament, "which has prohibited all disputation upon that doctrine." But where was *order* and *good government* all this while? Is it not most inexcusable indolence in the politic Chief Magistrate, to suffer his decrees to be thus set at nought? Should he not strain every nerve to bring these offenders to justice?

Not

Not an author, printer, publisher or vender of these disputationous tracts on the *Trinity*, should escape his vigilance or vengeance. To screen his remissness under the name of *the lenity of Government*, is a poor contemptible subterfuge. With an express law on his side, it is his duty to protect his establishment from such gross affronts, at all events. His establishment is not an establishment of *Lenity*. It binds about the neck of *Conscience* the iron chain of *Uniformity*, with the utmost rigour; and to relax it in any degree, can only serve to give suspicions, that this mighty *Leviathan*, with all his pretences of *public utility*, is conscious, that in enacting such laws as this concerning the *Trinity*, and others of the same sort, he exceeds his commission, and is obliged, by such *Toleration*, to subvert his own maxim. For, laying the interests of *Truth* and *Religion* out of the case, where is the *public utility* of giving this indulgence to the *Hydra of Controversy*, in a *civil* sense? If *public utility* is not incommodeed by it, what becomes of the Politician's grand argument against this Petition?

But, incongruous as it is in a Minister of State, to talk of a power of establishing a *particular* religion, and tolerating a *different* one, *on the same principle*, it is tenfold more absurd in a member of the *clerical society* to use this *lenitive* language. *His* fort is not in a plea of *public utility*, but in his own *snug centre of union*. If he puts the men who dissent from him, in a capacity to call in question the principle of his establishment with impunity, it may in the end prove dangerous to his *honourable distinctions* and *temporal possessions*. He should not suffer either the Chief Magistrate, or his subjects, to pry into the validity of his pretensions to either. *Public utility* gives the idea of *black* to one man, and of *white* to his next neighbour. In one Statesman's no-

tions of public utility, it is better to tolerate a few *Prevaricators* in the church, who make a trade of religion, than to exclude *prevarication* by complying with the Petition. A successor may arise, who will think it expedient, and even a point of *public utility*, to examine into the *nature* and *circumstances* of this *trading* in religion, and the result may be, that these *honourable distinctions* are conferred, *in the main*, upon unworthy objects, and these *temporal possessions* distributed with a partiality which is a reproach to all *order* and *good government*: nor should I wonder if such examination should take its rise from the intimations dropped in the Dean of Gloucester's *Apology for the present church of England as by law established*.

And this reminds me of two or three incidents which have fallen out, since the Petition for relief in the matter of subscription, was rejected.

Soon after this event, it was proposed, it seems, to limit the demands of the Clergy upon their Parishioners to a certain number of years, and to provide, that no claims of tithes, &c. which had laid dormant, should be admitted against the quiet and uninterrupted possession of the Parishioners for that length of time.

A Reverend Friend whom I met on a visit, in company with three or four of his brethren, made no scruple to put this attempt upon the sacred order, to the account of the Petitioners; and as the company were unanimous in that opinion, I left them to enjoy it at their leisure. And yet certain it is, that a bill of this tendency was projected and talked of many months before the Petition to remove subscriptions was heard of, or, as I verily believe, was thought of. And there cannot be a stronger proof of the Petitioners having no concern in that matter, than that they had not any more determined

determined adversaries in the House of Commons, than were some of the projectors and patrons of this *limiting* bill.

It may, indeed, be a subject of speculation, both to philosophers and politicians, to find the motive on which the same gentlemen, who were so zealous to deprive the clergy of a *temporal* privilege, should be as earnest in confining them to a practice, which is understood to occasion some degree of *prevarication* among them. Human laws cannot always be so strictly worded, as not to leave room for evasion ; I have been informed, that the intended Bill was as liable to this imperfection, as some other Acts respecting the clergy, have been before it. Could these gentlemen expect that a sort of men would strictly adhere to the plain sense of *one* law, which affected their property so materially, who are supposed so frequently to employ their dexterity in quibbling away the plain sense of *another* ?

This imputation, therefore, must be taken, only as an adjunct of that foolish calumny, which ascribes to the Petitioners a design to ruin the Church of England. But as I am persuaded that neither the Petition, nor the limiting Bill had any such design, or would have had any such effect, I shall be free to confess, that, had I been one of the Petitioners, I should not have thought of opposing a Bill of this nature, provided the limitations in it were extended to every order in the church, and to every body of men incorporated for ecclesiastical purposes.

In the various conversations I have heard upon this subject, I could never find more than two allegations against it, which deserved the least notice.

The first went upon the supposition, that " all donations " to, and endowments of churches, had the sanction of a
" kind

" kind of *consecration*, and that even the municipal Law of
 " our own country had annexed the idea of *Sacrilege* to
 " the subtraction of them by the Laity *.—That the with-
 " holding or secreting such donations, &c. for a number of
 " years, was rather an aggravation of the sin, than a di-
 " minution of the incumbent's title to them.—That, there-
 " fore, the Legislature would not only be *unreasonable*, but
 " *irreligious*, in shutting this door upon the clergy, and de-
 " priving them of the means of recovering what the iniqui-
 " ty of former or latter times may have disposed the *malefi-*
 " *dious* possessors to conceal or detain."

I dare say I shall be allowed by every one who knew the late Archbishop of Canterbury, to suppose, there is not a man in the three kingdoms more likely to urge this argument in favour of the church, than he would have been, in case this Bill had been brought into Parliament in his life-time. And, therefore, without discussing the point either on *theological* or *legal* principles, I shall only appeal to his Grace's authority in a work, which we must, in common charity, believe to contain his last and latest sentiments upon the subject.

The fact," says his Grace, " is notorious, that all our *tem-*
poral powers and privileges are merely concessions of the
 " state †."

* Tithes are called, *a spiritual fee*; and Hobart. Rep. 42. says, " that which
 " is given in lieu of tithes, is turned into *a spiritual fee*."—" In these latter
 " ages," (says Godolphin, 349) " not regarding what St. Hierom says, that
 " *fraudare ecclesiam est sacrilegium*, all artifices imaginable are put in practice
 " to subduct the tithes, and therefore to enforce the due payment thereof, were
 " the statutes of Hen. 8. and Ed. 6. made and enacted."

† Letter to Mr. Walpole, p. 10. But Coke and Selden had discovered this
 secret before him; and we see in the note above, that the *jus divinum* would not
 do, without ths *jus humanum*.

If the powers and privileges of Bishops are upon this footing with the state, much more, surely, are the *temporalities* of the inferior clergy. And it is to be noted, that as his Grace allows, that, if it so pleased the state, "Bishops might be both without *Peerages* and *Consistory Courts*," there must be a legal competency in the Legislature to judge when, where, and in what manner it may be expedient to augment, withdraw, or modify these concessions from time to time, as the exigencies of the public may require*.

It is upon this principle, I apprehend, that the Petitioners offered their Grievance to the consideration of the Honourable House of Commons in the first place. Here sit their representatives, and here, as they are freeholders of *Great Britain*, the conditions on which they hold their freeholds, are more immediately cognisable. Subscription to the thirty-nine articles, &c. is *one* such condition; and they must have deserted both their principle and their cause, had they opposed Mr. Seymour's Limitation-bill upon the allegation of a *divine right* to their temporal possessions.

Orthodox churchmen, whatever *concessions* they may make in any present distress, have always shewn the utmost reluctance to have their ecclesiastical claims canvassed in Parliament, and particularly in the House of Commons. And accordingly, though they did not think proper to call in question, the principle upon which I have supposed the Petitioners to conduct themselves, they found the means to attack them upon other pretences, first, upon the *illegality*,

* " Nothing has lost the Pope so much in his supremacy, as not acknowledging what Princes gave him. 'Tis a scorn upon the civil power, and an unthankfulness in the Priest. But the church runs to *jus divinum*, lest if they should acknowledge what they have by positive law, it might as well be taken from them, as given to them." *Selden's Table-talk. Tit. Jus Divinum.*

and

and secondly, upon the *impropriety* of the *mode* of their application.

With respect to the first pretence, it was reported, that they had procured an opinion from one or more sages of the law; that, by presenting a Petition of this nature to the House of Commons in the *first* instance, the Petitioners had incurred a *Premunire*, such application being derogatory to the King's *Supremacy* in all causes ecclesiastical.

Permit me to ask, Would this opinion have been solicited, would it have been given, if the Petitioners had applied to the Bishops in the first place? Was not every anti-petitioning mouth opened against them, for thus railing by their proper superiors; and did not the Bishops themselves highly resent this affront? I would ask then, what circumstance brought the Petitioners within the peril of a *Premunire*, by applying to the *House of Commons*, which would not have exposed them to the same peril, had they petitioned the Bishops only? The words, in the Act, 16. Rich. II. *shall pursue any process in the Court of Rome, or elsewhere,* are, I am informed, the ground of the opinion given on this occasion. Does not the word, *elsewhere*, include the body of the Bishops, whether in or out of convocation, as well as the House of Commons?

Dr. *Wood* tells us, "By the word *elsewhere*, it is said, "that suits in *Equity*, to relieve against a judgment at law, "and suits in the *Admiralty*, suits in the courts of the *Constable* and *Marshal*, and in the *ecclesiastical* Courts, for "matters belonging to the cognisance of the *common Law*, "are within the statute *." To this, indeed, he puts a
quære,

* *Wood*, B. iii. c. 3. His *quære* refers us to 4. Hen. iv. c. 23. (it is the 22d on the roll) which is little to the purpose, and is only the amendment of another Act, which confined the Incumbent wrongfully ousted, to bring his suit within
the

quære, though he cites for his authority, *Coke's Institutes*. Be it observed, however, that suits in *Parliament* are not comprehended in this list. On the other hand, when we consider, that the statute of *Rich. II.* was aimed at the Pope's encroachments on the royal *supremacy*, and that Bishops were the *spiritual* heirs of his pretensions, it will readily occur, that, on this very account, the word, *elsewhere*, must have had a more especial respect to them, whether sitting in their *courts*, or in their *conclaves*. And whoever he was that gave the opinion, concerning the first application of the Petitioners to the House of Commons, needed not to have gone so far about, (as he must have done in *that* case) to bring them within the statute, had they begun with petitioning the Bishops.

And now that we are upon this subject, let us proceed a little farther. How would the King's supremacy be affected by this application to the House of Commons? *We give not to our Prince*, says the 37th article, *the ministring either of God's word, or of the sacraments*. What is the meaning of this *restrictive clause*? Is it merely that the Prince shall not preach a sermon, or read a chapter in the Bible to his people? Does it not seem to lay some restraints upon such of his *edicts* as may relate to the ministring of God's word, by interfering with the *mode* of such ministring prescribed by law? If it does, a mere act of the royal supremacy could not, according to this Article, have relieved the Petitioners.

the year, 13. *Rich. II.* c. 1. Whereas this Law of K. *Hen.* gives the Incumbent liberty to sue for his remedy, and to begin his suit, at what time shall please him, within the year, or after, at his will. But supposing the case cognisable at Common Law, it would still be on the peril of a *Premunire*, if he instituted his suit in the Ecclesiastical Court, any thing in this statute to the contrary notwithstanding.

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If it does not, it takes from the Prince a privilege, which the laws allow to the very meanest of his people. In either case, how will the Hierarchy excuse K. James I. for preaching his long sermons to his Parliaments, or his giving directions to other Preachers, concerning the expounding any texts of scripture whatsoever?

But this is not all. Exound the clause of the Article either way, and try if you can make it consistent with the Royal Supremacy as stated by the common law, which gives our Kings sacerdotal powers without any such restriction.

"The King of England," says Godolphin, "is Persona sacra, et mixta cum sacerdote, and at his coronation, by a solemn Consecration and Unction, becomes a spiritual Person, sacred and ecclesiastical, and then hath, tam Vestem Dalmaticam, as an emblem of his Royal Priesthood, quam Coronam Regni, in respect of the Regal power in temporals *."

By this account, our Prince is invested with all sacerdotal, as well as regal power, without exception, and consequently with the power of ministering of God's word, and of the sacraments. Nor will any greater difficulty arise from the mixta persona in his Majesty, with respect to the two provinces of King and Priest, than from the mixture of a spiritual function with a temporal Peerage in the person of a Bishop.

It is hardly to be supposed, that an Article which was framed so long after these now prescriptive Rites of Consecration and Investiture were instituted, should supersede the powers conferred by those solemnities ; and therefore, if his Majesty's Supremacy must be brought into the debate, let it be considered, whether they who would give up the Article, or they who so pertinaciously adhere to it, are more in danger of a *Premunire*.

* *Report. Canon.* p. 9.

As the law now stands, it is acknowledged on all hands, that these thirty-nine Articles cannot be set aside but by the Legislature. Some people indeed, have been wild enough to hold, (upon the authority however of a famous Lawyer) that even the Legislature can make no alteration in our Ecclesiastical Constitution, without infringing the Act of Union ; a doctrine too absurd even for the Author of the Book of *Alliance* to digest.

To petition or appeal to the Legislature, then, is to petition or appeal to the King in his Parliament, the only method in which the Petitioners could expect relief from his Majesty in the present case, nor indeed do they seem to have been unmindful of his Majesty's peculiar province in an application of this nature ; for though they begin with suppling the Commons, there is, in the prayer of their Petition, an appeal to his Majesty's PIETY, with full as much dutiful respect, I apprehend, as they would have shewn, in appealing to the Royal Supremacy, without noticing the Parliament.

But to leave this *tender point*, as *Godolphin* calls it *, (a point which ought to be full as *tender* to a Bishop as a Petitioner) and to consider the objection to an *immediate* application to the House of Commons, on the subject of this Petition, taken from the supposed *Impropriety* of it.

This *Impropriety*, it seems, was alledged to consist, in applying for relief to a Body of Men, who were not supposed to be competent judges of a grievance, the nature of which could not be thoroughly understood, without an accurate knowledge in the deepest points of theology.

How the Honourable Commons come by their learning, I presume not to know. But this I can safely affirm as a

* *Godolphin*. u. s. p. 11.

matter of fact, that if there was any want of knowledge in the debate on the 6th of *February*, it was not among the Advocates of the Petition. Those worthy persons could not have understood the question better, had they studied the controversy for twice seven years *. The question indeed was a very plain one, *viz.* Whether the *same men* who solemnly engage on their entrance into the Ministry, to teach the people from *the pure word of God only*, could, *on the very same occasion*, be reasonably required to teach *the same people* according to a system which is *not* the pure word of God *only*? For, be it remarked, with all due deference to the influential conductor of the antipetitioning cause, he himself declined the task of adjusting the Articles to a consonancy with the scriptures; in which he shewed the good

* Perhaps this may not easily be credited by those who have seen no more of the Debate than appeared in the News-papers, in which great caution was used to give no more of the speeches in favour of the Petition, than was just necessary to illustrate the *laboured Answers* of its opponents, most of which were inserted at full length. This was, no doubt, contrived on the *charitable consideration*, that the eyes of the people who had so long sat in darkness, should not be too suddenly incommoded with the full glare of light, which might have broke in upon them by an impartial exhibition of the Replies to those Answers. To the same sort of *prudential, benevolent*, and perhaps *pastoral* management, we may ascribe the pains that have been taken to bring forward every thing which might set the Petitioners in an invidious light, and to keep back every thing which tended to qualify these impressions by more equitable representations. These little arts, however, seem now to be losing their influence, and consequently, their use. The people are becoming more and more inquisitive into the merits of the cause. They begin to perceive that they themselves have an important interest in the event, as well as the clergy. The serious part of them see it is no matter of indifference, that their teachers should be free from every engagement, which may throw an imputation, or even the remotest suspicion upon their sincerity. And as this knowledge gradually gains ground, we may hope the tricks and sophistries that have been instrumental in suppressing it, will now be detected, and the authors of them held in no higher estimation than such practices intitle them to.

sense of a skilful Divine, as well as the circumspection of a prudent Statesman.

Where the ingenious Gentlemen on the other side learned their language, might perhaps be an amusing inquiry. We have observed already, that *all* of them did not strictly adhere to the sentiments of my Lords the Bishops, either in their premisses, or in the inferences they grounded upon them. And they who appeared to stick more to their Brief, acquitted themselves with so little candour towards the Petitioners, that these supplicants could hardly feel any remorse for not applying to the Bishops in the *first* instance. For surely the contempt and abuse thrown upon the Petitioners, could hardly be justified by barely asserting, that *no alteration is necessary*; in support of which aphorism, the dispensers of it seemed to be left by their clients to find reasons as they could.

I give this only as a *conjectural* account, why the Petitioners did not follow the advice so often given them in News-papers and Pamphlets to commit their cause to the Bishops. They might have others to which I am a stranger. But even bystanders could see and remark, from the profound silence of their Lordships during so many months as elapsed from the first meeting at the *Feathers* Tavern, to the day of hearing in *February*, that the Petitioners had little or nothing to expect from that quarter; and even bystanders came to know, that in that interval, some individuals had applied to their respective Dioceſans for their sentiments on the ſubject, without the least satisfaction or effect.

These things being considered and laid together, it will clearly appear to the intelligent reader, that as the Petitioners were perfectly right in making their first application

tion to the House of Commons, so they would have been perfectly wrong and inconsistent with their own pretensions, had they raised, or joined in any opposition to the Bill for *limiting the claims of the clergy*, either in their *civil* or *ecclesiastical* capacity.

In the other objection to Mr. Seymour's limiting Bill, the Petitioners are very little, if at all concerned; certainly no farther, than they may wish our gracious Sovereign may reign undisturbed by any misunderstanding with any class of his people.

The objection was, that "the Bill proposed, had a tendency to *embroil* the Crown with the Church."

As I was not present at this debate, I take this particular from common report, which adds, that this probable effect of the law in question, was suggested by one of those who affect to distinguish themselves from some others of his Majesty's *equally loving* subjects, by the title of *Friends to the Crown*.

I should have thought, that a *real* friend to the Crown would have been cautious how he dropped an apprehension of that sort in the company where it was said to be delivered. Where there is a Legislature to interpose between the Crown and *any* Body of men who are disposed to quarrel with it, the Crown should have little to fear from the discontents of the Church, unless there should be some secret article in the *Alliance* between the Crown and the Church, to which the people and their representatives in parliament are no parties. If the Crown and the Church have their uses for each other, distinct from the interests and welfare of the public, and out of the cognisance of its constitutional Guardians, it may be a point of prerogative wisdom to avoid a breach with the church. And does not *this* objection to the limiting Bill seem to imply a connection of that nature?

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And would it not intimate to the audience, that the *less ostensible* Articles of the *Alliance* might be *inimical* to the rights and liberties of a free people?

The Patrons of the *limiting Bill*, it is possible, might perceive something in the *visible* effects of such Alliance, detrimental to the community at large, and not very honourable to the Crown. *Commendams, Dispensations, Pluralities*, to which the Crown either directly or ministerially gives its sanction, have been known to scandalize some honest men, who think they ought to be edified by the *moderation* of pious Bishops, and the *simplicity* of conscientious Presbyters, not to mention the murmurs of those who are obliged, through these indulgences, to pay for entertainment they never taste. The Patrons of this Bill could not be ignorant, of what nineteen in twenty of their constituents are well aware, that is to say, of an immense increase of Property daily accruing to the Church, which is likely enough, without a timely interposition of the legislature, to render the church paramount to every other *Society* in the Kingdom, and even to the Crown itself. All the world knows by this time, that the Church is Mistress of an accumulating fund, which, in a course of years (perhaps not much longer than that which has run out since *Harry the Eighth's* resumptions) will, upon a fair and moderate calculation, enable her to purchase an estate more than equivalent to that, which was, at that period, alienated from her; and all this by the *Bounty* of the Crown.

Surely it behoves, that the Church should do the Crown some very essential service in return for these generous Benefactions. Our Monarchs have been, in most periods, wary enough not to dispense their favours, particularly of the pecuniary kind, without some valuable considerations.

But

But what the *service* expected from the Church may be in grateful return for this kindness, would be hard to say, unless we may be allowed to conjecture, that the Rev. Dr. *Nowell* was her Spokesman on the *thirtieth* day of *January*, 1772. And that being presupposed, we can hardly wonder that thanks for his performance were discovered *ex post facto*, to have been misplaced, and that he should be referred to those who had greater obligations to him, to comfort him for his disappointment.

As this discovery was made after the Petition for relief in the matter of subscription was rejected, I could not help musing a little on the very different impressions the same subject, considered in different lights, will make, sometimes within a very few days, upon the same audience.

It is probable Dr. *Nowell* might, on this occasion, adopt his doctrine more immediately from a certain *Decree* of the University in which he enjoys *an honourable distinction*. Nevertheless, had he been heard by his Counsel, a very indifferent Advocate might have shewn, that the Doctor's inferences are strictly deducible from the doctrine of our *Hymn* against *Rebellion*, which are appointed to be read on every solemn commemoration of the *Martyrdom*, and to which every Clerk, and every Graduate, is obliged to subscribe his unfeigned assent and consent, as *agreeable* to the word of God.

I apprehend the Gentlemen who stigmatized the Petitioners as disturbers of the *public peace*, and fomenters of *Controversy*, were not a little interested to keep the Doctor and his principles in credit. Why did they not exert themselves to screen the preacher from a disgrace, which, by falling upon him, fell unavoidably at the same time upon the *Thirty-fifth Article of the Church of England*? Why should the Petitioners

Petitioners be deemed *mad* and *frantic*, for attempting to remove those Articles, whose doctrine, in a most important point, Dr. Nowell was deemed *mad* and *frantic* for espousing?

I freely own, that, in my poor opinion, the continuing so general a Subscription to these Homilies, is no great act of friendship to the Crown, or to the gracious head which wears it ; especially considering the law by which it is there placed. Prevarication in a point of that national concern, has but an untoward aspect upon the allegiance which the same subscribers are obliged to pledge to the present Royal Family. The Laity honestly insure their fidelity to his Majesty, by a plain oath without any reserve or drawback. Can a clerical subscription to a doctrine which implies, that the Revolution of 1688, was neither *rightful* or *lawful*, serve to any other purpose, when contrasted with the oath of abjuration, than to hint to the public, the convenience of leaving open a door of retreat for the *clerical society*, in case the crown should come into circumstances of *embroilment* with the church ? And ought the Petitioners to become obnoxious to any friend of the crown, for endeavouring to shut the door against a pretence of that kind ?

There is another matter, canvassed with no little warmth among our political guardians since the fate of the Petition, which does no discredit to the cause of the Petitioners.

Order and good government seem to a plain understanding to require, that where there is a system of Religion (so called) adopted by the Magistrate for the practical uses of his people, care should be taken, that there be no contradiction or disagreement between the established civil policy, and the doctrines of that system. This has, I hope, sufficiently

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appeared from the case stated in the instance just mentioned. And it will be no less apparent from that I am going to give.

Were I disposed to give any opinion concerning the late law which lays a restraint upon the Royal Family with respect to their marriages, I should not perhaps condemn it with that severity which some writers have expressed. A Law of that sort may, for ought I know, be highly expedient for the public. But surely, before it was finally enacted, some course should have been taken with the *Thirty-second* of our Articles of Religion, which most expressly teaches, that, "It is lawful for ALL CHRISTIAN MEN "to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the "same to serve better to Godliness."

This *Thirty-second* Article, or at least the last clause of it, should indeed have been disposed of near twenty years ago, before the *Act to prevent clandestine marriages* took place. As things are now circumstanced among us, our confession allows us, as *Christian men*, i. e. subject to the Laws of the Gospel, *to marry at our own discretion, as we shall judge the same to serve better to Godliness*. But,

1. The law of the land says, "No; you shall not marry "at your own discretion, but at the discretion of your Parents or Guardians, on the peril of having your marriages declared *null and void*, your issue *bastardized*, and "the succession of your posterity defeated."

2. The Antipetitioners say, that the intent of requiring subscription of the clergy is, that they may all preach the *uniform doctrine* of the Articles. The law says, that, in the present instance at least, the Judge upon the bench shall preach a doctrine contrary to that of the 32d Article.—The Article leaves the marriage of the *Christian man to his own discretion, as he himself shall judge the same to serve better*

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to Godliness, that is, the article leaves it to his *conscience*. But the law interferes, and says, that in certain cases (where however conscience is a very capable judge) the man's conscience has nothing to do in the matter with respect to the *Godliness or Ungodliness* of his views, but the Conscience of his *Guardian*, or of my Lord *Chancellor*.

3. The clergyman subscribes his *assent* and *consent* to the Article as *agreeable to the word of God*. But if he acts according to the *doctrine* of the Article, in the said cases, and celebrates a marriage approved and authorised by it, he shall be transported as a felon.

4. The Petitioners are told, that their request cannot be complied with, as it would break in upon the *Uniformity* of the *establishment*. If therefore subscription is still to be continued as a means of preserving *Uniformity*, should not the latter part of this *Thirty-second Article* run thus? "It is not
" lawful for all Christian men to marry at their own dis-
" cretion, or as they themselves shall judge the same to
" serve better to *Godliness*, but shall govern themselves
" herein at the discretion of a Parent or a Guardian, as the
" Parent or the Guardian shall judge the same to serve bet-
" ter to" — whatever he or she pleases to substitute in
the room of *Godliness*.

It does not appear (at least from any minutes I have seen of the debates on the occasion) that the authority of this Article was expressly alledged in opposition to what is called the *Royal Marriage Act*. And yet this might have been expected from some of the episcopal bench, which, in general is understood to maintain, that *all* and *every* of the *Thirty-nine Articles* are *agreeable to the word of God*.

This silence of their Lordships is the more surprising, as the *doctrine* of the Article is pretty strongly asserted in certain

Remonstrances, retailed in the public prints, as part of the Proceedings of that illustrious Assembly of which their Lordships are members.

" We conceive," says one of them, " the right of conferring a discretionary power to prohibit all marriages, (whether vested in the Crown alone,— or in the manner now enacted by the Bill) to be above the reach of any legislature, as contrary to the original inherent *rights* of *human Nature*, which, as they are not derived from, or held under *civil Laws*, by no *civil Laws* can be taken away." — " To disable a man during his whole life, from contracting marriage, or what is tantamount, to make his power of contracting such marriage, dependant, neither on his own choice, nor upon any fixed rule of law, but on the arbitrary will of *any* man, or set of men, is exceeding the power permitted by the divine Providence to human Legislatures. It is directly against the earliest command given by God to mankind, contrary to the right of domestic society and comfort, and to the desire of lawful Posterity, the first and best of the instincts planted in us by the Author of our nature, and utterly incompatible with all Religion, natural and revealed, and therefore a mere act of power, having neither the nature nor obligation of law."

Again, another of these Remonstrances affirms, that " the liberty of Marriage is a natural right inherent in mankind,— that this right is confirmed and enforced by the Holy Scriptures, which declare marriage to be of Divine institution, and deny to none the benefit of that Institution,— that the Law of Nature and Divine Institutions, are not reversible by the power of human Legislatures."

This language, I apprehend, is strictly conformable to
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the doctrine of the Article, and is not to be confuted but by shewing, that human Legislators have the authority which is here denied them.

It is true, there are concessions in both these Remonstrances, which may seem to favour the restrictions in the *Act to prevent clandestine Marriages*, but really do not. For though it may be true, that the Legislature “ has a power of prescribing rules to marriage, as well as every other species of contract” though it may be expedient, that *Minors* “ should not marry without the consent of their Parents or Guardians,” yet the general doctrine laid down before, will make these *allowances* utterly insignificant to establish the validity of that Law.

For who are *Minors* with respect to a *capacity* for Marriage? “ None,” say our good old laws, “ who have attained the age of *Fourteen*;” and *Minority* and *Impuberty* are, with respect to marriage, synonymous terms, as may be seen in our Law-books. Nature indeed, as well as experience, seems to have fixed this period to determine the *discretion* of a man, as well as his *other* capacities for marriage; for allowing the *impediments* laid down in our laws, to be perfectly consistent with the *natural* and *scriptural* rights of the *Christian man*, what Youth of *Fourteen* years of age does not know, in what *degree* of *consanguinity* he is, or is not related to the woman he desires to marry? or whether he is under a *precontract* to any other woman, and so of the rest. The *discretion* therefore, of the Article, plainly means a competency of judgment with respect to the *essentials* of marriage, and is then sufficiently exercised, when the man’s choice stands clear of these *impediments*. If you carry *discretion* with respect to marriage, to any other particular instances, I am afraid you will find as many who, if we judge

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by events, have wanted discretion after twenty-one, as have wanted discretion before it.

As then the natural rights of a man to contract matrimony do, by an almost universal consent of divine and human laws commence with his *fifteenth* year, or his age of *Puberty*, upon what evidence are we to judge, that divine Providence has permitted human Legislatures to deprive the man of his choice, and confine him for seven long years (which with respect to great numbers is confining them for life) to the arbitrary will of one man, who acts by no rule of Law, and perhaps upon no better motives than those of *avarice* or *caprice*.

Though I have a strong prejudice in favour of every thing of this sort which appeals for its sanction to the word of God, rather than to the commandment of man, I do not know whether I should wish to be understood, that I give the preference to the Article, or the Protest, in comparison with these Laws *. All I mean to say, whatever I may think, is, that there is a manifest disagreement between our *Thirty-second* Article of Religion, and these two Laws. Which of them is the *more excellent*, is a question rather for my Lords the Bishops, than for us, who, having no *mixed* character, *must* follow the Law at all events. And their silence on passing of both these Laws (one Dissenter excepted) can-

* My old friend *Urban*, a most zealous *Devotee* to all political and ecclesiastical establishments, hath lately presented us with an *important* Paper, containing a *Demonstration* of the *Truth* of the *Thirty-nine* Articles of Religion, from *Scripture*. How he hath acquitted himself in *other* respects, let the Forest judge. I have only to remark, that, having the fear of *embroiling* the Crown with the Church before his eyes, when he comes to this *Thirty-second* Article, he is so far from *demonstrating* the *Truth* of this last clause of it from *Scripture*, that, with a *prudent reserve*, which would do honour to a *Privy Counsellor*, he does not chuse to mention even the *Contents* of it. See *The Gentleman's Magazine* for *April*, 1772. p. 160.

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not, I think, be otherwise accounted for, than by the supposition, that their Lordships thought the *Article* and the *Laws* were perfectly reconcileable to each other.

But should not their Lordships have considered, that what may be clear to them, is not always so to their numerous flocks, the very meanest of whom has his claim of a *divine*, as well as a *natural* right to Marriage, which the Article seems to secure to him in a way that does not admit of the restriction laid upon him by the *Act to prevent Clandestine Marriages*. And as their Lordships have thought proper to adhere to *all and every* of the *Thirty-nine Articles*, against the Petitioners of *February 6*, would it not have become their charity to have explained to the public, by what sort of reasoning this Article of our public *Confession of faith* might be made to stand its ground against this seeming contravention of a solemn *Act of Parliament*?

We read in history, that, when the Duke of *York* had married the Earl of *Clarendon's* daughter, in the year 1661,
 " The King ordered some Bishops and Judges to peruse the
 " proofs the Lady had to produce. And they reported,
 " that, according to the *Doctrine of the Gospel*, and the *Law
of England*, it was a good marriage ; so it was not possi-
 " ble to break it, but by trying how far the matter might
 " be carried against her for marrying a person so near the
 " King without his leave *." That is to say, how far the
 crime was a *capital* one, for *fine* or *imprisonment* would not
 have nullified the marriage.

Here was a clandestine marriage under every description of that offence, yet by a happy coincidence of the *Gospel*, and the *Law of England*, such as it was in those days, this

* Burnet, Hist. O. T. fol. vol. i. p. 168.

was a marriage it was not possible to break, but by an arbitrary act of power, which even *Charles II.* would not venture to exert.

For my part, I should not think the Prelates of our times at all less competent to judge a matter of this nature, than the Bishops of 1661. Would it not, therefore, have become them to have satisfied the people, (who are persuaded that the Gospel is what it always was from the beginning) that the connection between the *Law of England* and the *Gospel*, still subsists unbroken, notwithstanding these late *limitations* of the *natural rights* of marriage?

I have sometimes amused myself with trying what I could do towards reconciling the thirty-second Article of Religion with the tenor of the Act of Parliament, presuming, there might be no more difficulty in the attempt, than Father *Sinclair* found in trying to accommodate the first period of the said Article with the decree of the Council of *Trent*, which anathematized all who held the marriage of a Priest to be valid *jure divino*, notwithstanding it was judged to be null and void, *jure ecclesiastico* *.

But here a difficulty suggested by Bishop *Burnet* made me despair of succeeding in my trials. “ It may be justly doubted,”

* *Expos. Paraphrast.* ed. 3. octavo, p. 390. *Sinclair*, indeed, made but poor work of it on this article, and in the consciousness of his inefficiency, proceeds to express his hope, that the church of *England* might in time be brought to approve the Piety of *Trent*. *Quidni speremus*, says he, *morem illum antiquum et sanctum* (confining the clergy to a vow of celibacy) *denuo obtenturum, dum memorias nostras refricant, et publica illarum consuetudinum et decretorum impref- fione recenti, animos piorum ad eandem sanctimoniam pulsant*. This might be considered as a kind of prophetic hope, not very unlikely to be fulfilled, at the time *Sinclair*’s book was published. Who can tell what future times may produce? To confine our youth to a seven years celibacy from their puberty, is no unhopeful way to inure them to the same restraint for the rest of their lives.

" doubted," says this good Bishop, " whether the church
 " can make a Law that shall restrain all the Clergy in those
 " *natural rights*, in which Christ has left them *free*. The
 " adding a Law upon this head, to the laws of Christ,
 " seems to assume an authority that he has not given the
 " church *." Now, the latter part of the Article seeming
 to extend this *natural right* to *all Christian men*, and another
 Article having defined the church to be *a congregation of*
faithful men, I could not be sure, but the *civil powers* might
 be comprehended, under this idea of *the visible church of*
Christ, and consequently prohibited to make any Law to re-
 strain this *natural right* of *Christian men*; and I should cer-
 tainly have concluded, there was no way of vindicating the
 Law, but by dismissing these two Articles, had I not luckily
 bethought me of the *Fortieth*, which would authorise a sub-
 scription even to the institutions of a Pagan Priesthood.

And yet I know not how it comes to pass, the imposers
 of this *supplemental Article*, do not always seem to be *uni-*
formly orthodox in explaining the doctrinal proposition it is
 understood to contain.

" We have certainly a right," says an eminent Orator,
 " like every other society, to *exact a compliance* with what-
 " ever doctrines, ceremonies, and forms we establish, from
 " those who receive the public money for that very pur-
 " pose †."

To be sure, the Labourer is only *then* worthy of his hire,
 when he performs the work for which he is paid. But this
 is very little to the case in hand, unless they who are in-
 trusted with the disposal of the public money, have a right
 to establish what doctrines, ceremonies, and forms of reli-

* Burnet on Art, 32.

† See the St. James's Chronicle, March 3, 1772.

gion they please ; a point of right which some people are disposed to question *.”

“ Had I possessed a vote,” says the same speaker, “ when the Directory was going to be established, I would have divided

† “ The power of the Legislature is limited,” says the celebrated Junius, “ not only by the general rules of natural justice, and the welfare of the community, but by the forms and principles of our particular constitution.” *Dedication to his Letters*, 1772, p. vi. “ The discretion of an English Judge,” says the same Junius, “ is not of mere will and pleasure,—it is not arbitrary,—it is not capricious.—But as a great Lawyer [Coke] says, Discretion, taken as it ought to be, is, *discernere per legem, quid sit justum.* If it be not directed by the right line of the law, it is a crooked cord, and appeareth to be unlawful.” p. 313 of vol. ii. See more on this subject, by Sir Joseph Jekyll. Peere Williams ii. 685. N. B. This doctrine takes in the legislative, as well as the executive authority. But the principles of our particular Church-constitution, make the Law of GOD the only foundation of a right to establish the doctrines, ceremonies, and forms of our religion, and consequently, the rule of legislative Discretion. The droll mortal, who entertains the public weekly with his jokes on what he calls *patriotic paragraphs*, and the Prefacer to a spurious edition of Junius’s Letters, will needs father them upon the Orator above quoted. I apprehend the passages just cited, compared with that to which they refer, may afford a sufficient confutation of that surmise. But if any doubt remain, let the whole tenor of this speech be compared with the following strong expressions of Junius’s sense of our Church-affairs, and their Managers. “ An honest man, like the true religion, appeals to the understanding, or modestly confides in the internal evidence of his conscience. The impostor employs force instead of argument,” (i. e. exacts compliance) “ imposes silence where he cannot convince, and propagates his character by the sword.” *Letters*, Woodfall’s edition. vol. ii. p. 130. Speaking of one Mr Horne’s “ feasting with a rancorous rapture upon the sordid catalogue of his friend’s distresses,” he adds, “ Now let him go back to his cloister, the Church is a proper retreat for him. In his principles, he is already a Bishop.” ib. p. 195. Again, characterising himself under the signature of Philo Junius, “ These candid critics never remember any thing he [Junius] says in honour of our holy religion; though it is true, that one of his leading arguments is made to rest upon the internal evidence, which the purest of all religions carries with it. I quote his words, and conclude from them, that he is a true and hearty christian, in substance, not in ceremony; though

" divided for the *Common Prayer*; and had I lived when the
 " *Common Prayer* was re-established, I would have voted for
 " the *Directory*." Upon what principle, dear Sir, would
 you have taken this ground?—Evidently, from what goes
 before, upon the Principle of PUBLIC PEACE, and because
 he would defend every thing *already* established, from the
 Pope's *Viceroyship*, down to the Roman Augurs' Geese and
Chickens.

But, hold a little —. The Gentleman does not chuse
 you should run away with this *glimpse* of his *real* principles.

" though possibly he may not agree with my Reverend Lords the Bishops, or
 " with the Head of the Church, *that prayers are morality, or that kneeling is*
 " *religion.*" *ib.* p. 245. Once more, " His Majesty's predecessors (excepting
 " that worthy family from which you, my Lord, are unquestionably descended)
 " had some generous qualities in their composition, with vices, I confess, or
 " frailties in abundance. They were Kings or Gentlemen, not Hypocrites or
 " Priests. They were at the head of the church, but did not know the value
 " of their office. They said their prayers without ceremony, and had too little
 " priestcraft in their understanding, to reconcile the sanctimonious forms of reli-
 " gion, with the utter destruction of the morality of their people." p. 250.
 Can the man who penn'd these sentiments be supposed to be so utterly lost to all
 sense of consistency, as to deliver a speech in support of a human establishment,
 (professing, however, to be founded on *the purest of all religions*) fraught with
 arguments and topics, equally favourable to the establishments of *Rome* pagan or
 papal, of *Constantinople*, or even of the *Cape of Good Hope*? What English Pro-
 testant would not weep to think that he should have an advocate of Junius's abi-
 lities and pretensions to integrity, who, after nobly asserting his *political* privi-
 leges with powers of reasoning and language, superior to all the masters of elo-
 quence upon record, should, in a frothy declamation, calculated for the views of
 a minister he detests, and the understandings of a majority he despises, abandon
 all the forts of Christian Liberty, and deliver up a set of honest, conscientious,
 liberal-minded Gentlemen and Scholars to the tyranny and insults of priestcraft
 and hypocrisy, from which he would have us to understand he has so successfully
 emancipated himself? Is that the way to give its proper value to *morality*, above
 the *sanctimonious forms of religion*? Impossible! To identify the writer and the
 speaker, is treason against virtue, morality, christianity, common sense, and hu-
 man nature.

:And therefore (most consistently to be sure with what had gone before), gives it as the *obvious* (read *offensive*) reason of this conduct in the cases of the *Common Prayer* and the *Directory*, “that they were not essentially different; neither of them contained any thing contrary to the scriptures, or that could shock a rational Christian. And the Articles appeared to him in the same light.”

Was it well done? Was it like *Cassius*, to desert the *Fortieth Article*, the *Solver of all Scruples*, the *Reconciler of all Contradictions*, the *Adjuster of all Prevarications*, and to put the issue upon the merits of the *Thirty-nine*? What must be done with the compliment paid him by Dr. H——x, as the decisive finisher of the whole controversy? Will the orthodox be permitted to let it rest upon *his* bare assertion, that, “there is nothing in the thirty-nine Articles contrary to scripture?”—If not, must not some of them, out of mere gratitude, be obliged to find *proofs* for it, and by that means be carried once more into the wild sea of Theological Controversy? And what Apology will he make to the ingenious *Founder* of this *Fortieth Article*, for remitting him to a mode of Defence, for which he seems to be totally unprepared, and which even *Ministerial* encouragement would, I conjecture, hardly rouse him to undertake?

“For my own part,” says the Gentleman, “I am no friend to innovations in religion, when the people are not, in consequence of some religious abuse, much aggrieved. That was the case at the *Reformation*, and then would I have heartily concurred in the alteration at that time made, had I been a member of this House.”

But can we, can the Gentleman himself be certain, that he would have concurred in the *alterations* made at that period? Were not the same arguments used by the *Nonreformers*

formers against the alterations then, that this Orator applies to the present occasion? *The disturbance of Public Peace, the danger of multiplying Heresies, and the sufficient perfection of the doctrines, ceremonies, and forms then established?* Is not the question now, whether both clergy and people are not aggrieved by the subscriptions established? Is it no grievance to a conscientious people, that their Ministers are brought under the disagreeable dilemma, either to withhold from them what they are *persuaded* is the *pure word of God*, or to fall under the reproach of having falsified their subscription *? Did the Gentleman never hear the scripture quoted in contradiction to the doctrine of an Article? Did he not hear it affirmed, that some of the Articles were *contrary to scripture*, and *shocking to rational Christians*? Did not some of those who opposed the Petition, *decline* the defence of the Articles? And must we take an *ipse dixit* from an individual who cannot be supposed to have examined the Articles by the scriptures, with more accuracy and precision, than has been done by a *Lord of the Treasury*? It is very unlikely that this *Postulatum* should be surrendered to him without some little debate. I question whether Dr. *Tucker* himself would grant it, without the qualifying words, *in the main*. What then may be the consequence of settling at last on the *merits* of the question? Too probably the revival of that *Hydra of Controversy*, which would put one of his coadjutors to so much expence for *opium* and *mandragora* to quell and stupify it.

I shall have the less to say concerning subscriptions *exact-*

* Observe, the Priest is required at his ordination to promise "to teach no-
thing (as required of necessity to eternal salvation) but that which he shall be
PERSUADED may be concluded and proved by the scripture."

ed of Students and Graduates in our Universities, as the propriety of them is universally given up in every department, but those where the most substantial reasons for abolishing them, appear from the plainest matters of fact. Even the Dean of *Glocester* sacrifices *these* subscriptions to *propriety in the reason of things*, though by that concession he gives no inconsiderable blow to his second *Postulatum*. Academical Degrees are certainly *honourable*, though not so *lucrative distinctions*, as Deanries or Bishopricks. And as they are conferred *in ordine ad temporalia*, the Gentlemen of *Oxford* have given us reasons, as good as the best of Dr. *Tucker's*, why these candidates for *offices* in the *clerical society*, should be bound to the *centre of Union*, as firmly as they who are to enter upon present pay *.

The Academical Guardians of *Cambridge* indeed, appear to be in an odd situation. They seem to be sensible, *how good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity*, and wish, no doubt, to exemplify the Psalmist's exhortation, by coming to a perfectly right understanding with their *Oxonian Kinsmen*. But the difficulty is, how this league may be brought about with a perfect *saving* to the honour of both these learned bodies. The *Cambridge-men*, on the one hand, will not, I suppose, readily reprobate the wisdom of their predecessors out of mere compliment to *Oxford*. On the other hand, it may be depended upon, that *Oxford* will never shake hands with them, till they give her a reason, why subscriptions at matriculation were abrogated

* See A complete collection of Papers, which have been published in *Oxford*, on the subject of subscription to the thirty-nine Articles, &c. at Matriculation.
Leacroft.

at Cambridge, which may perfectly consist with the wisdom of Oxford in continuing them.

In the mean time the world is at gaze, how this affair, which hath created so much perplexity to all true friends to subscriptions, will end. This test can hardly be continued in the Universities without some reflection on the wisdom of some of the most strenuous Adversaries of the late Petition, who were candid enough to confess, that Academical Subscriptions had no colour of Reason to countenance them. On the other hand, it would not be decent to drop them without giving some reason;—*some reason*, perhaps, which the vigilant Petitioners might hereafter find the means to turn to their own advantage.

It was lately my fortune to fall in company with an ancient, learned, and most worthy Divine, who had formerly been chaplain to an eminent Prelate, not long since deceased. He told me he had carefully read all the arguments that had been offered, for excusing students and candidates for degrees in the Universities, from subscribing the thirty-nine Articles; and he assured me, there were very few of them which would not equally conclude for excusing *nine* in every *ten* of those who had offered themselves for orders during the time he had officiated as examiner on those occasions. Perhaps the first extract in the following *Appendix*, may help the reader to conceive the probability of this account.

And to the reader I leave it, whether the conclusion of the *Collection* I have just referred to, may not be applied with the fullest propriety to the Tracts in favour of subscription which have been aimed at the Petitioners, without confining it to Oxford or Cambridge. Here it is.

“ Such are the most material objections to each particu-
lar

" lar Hypothesis." [viz. upon which the *Oxford-subscriptions* are defended.] " A presumption unfavourable to them all, it must be acknowledged, arises from hence, that in the place" [read Kingdom] " where this Test hath so long obtained, the very persons who have required it, and who continue to patronize it, are not only *not agreed* what mode of *Defence* they may rely on, but seem even at a loss what interpretation they shall give to an Act, whose full and natural obligation they are afraid to avow."

A P P E N D I X.

N° I.

Extract from a Pamphlet, intituled, Advice from a Bishop, in a series of Letters to a Young Clergyman [his Nephew] Printed for M. COOPER, Pater-noster Row, 1759. Letter ii. p. 17.

—“ Whether the Subscription now exacted at our admission into the Church, and which some of the Clergy have considered in the same light with the bigotted members of the church of Rome, to be made according to the sense of the Compilers (*a*), and not as Articles of Peace, I say, whether this hath not a tendency to abate such a serious sense (*b*), in those especially who consider it in that light, and must necessarily (*c*) therefore be guilty of Prevarication, I will not determine: but it hath always appeared to me to be a point, which deserves more consideration than I could ever get bestowed upon it. The church, we know, doth now not set up for infallibility; and *in fact* (*d*) doth not require any other subscription, than what is necessary to Peace and Order: But then this should be *publicly* and *explicitly declared* (*e*), and not be left liable to any misapprehension from weak and unthinking people, either to their own offence, or the condemnation of their brethren.”

Again, p. 19. “ There is no one pretends to deny, that the first Reformers from Popery were obliged upon their own principles, to reject that authority which the church

" of *Rome* had assumed as its undoubted right ; and that
 " all their proceedings should be warranted by the express
 " Word of God (*f*). Accordingly, when these Articles,
 " declaring the Faith and doctrine of Christianity, were
 " drawn up for the clergy, they were drawn up with
 " a view to distinguish themselves from those whom they
 " had reformed upon ; and by an Act of the Legislature,
 " a subscription to them was made a qualification for or-
 " ders in the church. The authority claimed by the church
 " of Rome for establishing articles of faith, was of another
 " nature,—pretended to be derived from God,—and made
 " subscription almost as sacred and explicit as an oath (*g*).
 " Our ancestors presumed on no such authority : they
 " knew and owned themselves to be fallible : nay, they
 " were so far from requiring an assent to human composi-
 " tions, with the same strictness as to the word of God, that
 " in one of the Articles, it is expressly declared, that what
 " cannot be proved by scripture, is not to be required of
 " any man to be believed as an Article of Faith. Our Re-
 " formers were sensible and honest men ; but the age in
 " which they lived, had no extraordinary light and know-
 " ledge in religion (*h*).

" A considerable modern writer of the church of Eng-
 " land," (I believe his Lordship meant the late Dr. *Water-*
land) " hath been pleased indeed to discover, that the com-
 " pilers of these Articles were not able to express their sen-
 " timents in apt and proper terms ; because the very Ar-
 " ticles which they designed as an explicit test against *Armi-*
nianism, are very capable," he said, " of an *Arminian* sense.
 " You would be surprised to find this man of the first
 " sense and learning, not only attempting to prove, that the
 " Articles are capable of an *Arminian* construction, but also
 " that

" that in their most obvious and plain interpretation, they
 " do support that doctrine. But the modesty of the Gen-
 " tleman is still more conspicuous when he complains of the
 " *Unitarians* for subscribing the Articles of the Trinity. Be-
 " cause their subscription is to be justified by the same way
 " of reasoning ; and it would have puzzled him extremely,
 " to find an answer to this plea, that the second Article in
 " the natural import of the words, is in favour of the Uni-
 " tarian System, and directly levelled against the ortho-
 " dox explication. But this by the way (*i*).

" At the time when these Articles were first compiled
 " as a confession of faith in the church of England, the
 " greatest part, if not all the clergy, were rigid Calvinists,
 " and they intended to declare in favour of the doctrine
 " which they believed. This was the rise and design of
 " these Articles of Religion, we are now to consider their ob-
 " ligation. A spiritual obligation (*k*), I have already told
 " you, the Reformers were obliged, upon their own prin-
 " ciples to disavow. They discarded all pretensions to in-
 " fallibility, and they could do no otherwise, or their sepa-
 " ration from Rome had been highly criminal. The Legis-
 " lature afterwards ratified the Articles, to distinguish, or
 " to vindicate this separation from Popery, which had taught
 " other doctrines (*l*) ; and that they might exclude the men
 " of that religion from intruding into the church of Eng-
 " land, they required these Articles to be subscribed by all
 " their clergy. The obligation, you see, therefore, is merely
 " of a civil nature (*m*), and the explanation of the Articles,
 " from that time to this, hath been various and uncertain.
 " Different interpretations of the same point of doctrine,
 " have been allowed and approved by the governors of our
 " church, as orthodox, a latitude hath been taken, and pro-

" fessedly, by many of the greatest churchmen, in some
 " points ; and ought therefore to be allowed in others, as
 " well as them. Compare the writings of our clergy in
 " both kingdoms, for almost an hundred years past, with
 " the Articles, and see if you can find, that they tally on
 " the points which are commonly called Calvinistical. If
 " not, the same rule of subscription may be followed in all
 " other cases, which the highest churchmen have followed
 " in this without blame, ever since the days of Archbishop
 " LAUD (n).

" Indeed the affair of subscription is pretty much the same
 " with obsolete Acts of Parliament, which, though not for-
 " mally repealed, have lost their force (o). The Legislature
 " hath not thought it proper to make any change in the
 " forms which were at first established for an admission
 " into the church, though it is well known, that the sen-
 " timents of almost all her members, in some points, are
 " greatly changed. For it is likewise known too, that as
 " words are only arbitrary signs of conveying our ideas, so
 " the same signs may be continued, though the thing signi-
 " fied be greatly altered (p). Thus though there is no for-
 " mal repeal of the usual terms of subscription by the Le-
 " gislature, in which the sole authority we know is vested, yet
 " the main end of such subscription being attained (q), it
 " indulges the clergy with a liberty of affixing different
 " ideas to the same words, though foreign perhaps from
 " those which were originally designed.

" The Legislature may be assured, that there never was, and
 " I will venture to say, there never will be, a subscription to
 " all the Articles, according to the plain sense and meaning
 " of the first compilers : and as it hath never been decla-
 " red, that such alone is the subscription which is requi-
 " red, by depriving those whose public writings contradict
 " this

" this original sense, it is evident, that a subscription is allowed in any sense which is agreeable to the word of God (r).
 " For he who subscribes the Articles in a sense equally consistent with the public good, and the rights and properties of his fellow-subjects, equally answers the intention of the Legislature in the law which requires any subscriptions; and, abstracted from the force of the law, ecclesiastical impositions in a Protestant church, are impertinent and vain (s). Why a subscription to these Articles is still required in our church, though the sentiments of her clergy are so much altered, is another question, I own, which it is natural for you to ask, but which a wiser man than I am cannot answer (t)."

R E M A R K S.

(a) His Lordship is here very confused. But he seems to mean, that the Romish clergy and people receive and subscribe the forms of their own Church in the sense of the compilers of them; and that some of our own clergy have taken subscription to our Articles in the same light, without considering them as Articles of *peace*, which may be subscribed in *any* sense the words will bear. And this his Lordship calls *bigotry*.

(b) How a subscription to a form in the original sense, intended to be expressed by the compilers of such forms, " tends to abate the seriousness of such a sense," is utterly incomprehensible.

(c) This, I think, implies, that every one who subscribes the Articles in the sense of the compilers, must necessarily be guilty of Prevarication.

(d) His Lordship is here strangely mistaken. The church,

in fact, doth require an explicit subscription, which, whatever the church may set up for, cannot *de jure* be required by any church which doth *not* set up for *infallibility*.

(e) But a public and explicit declaration would probably tend to discover, that the church hath no real authority to require this subscription ; which the church, perhaps, may think a *greater inconvenience* than the *misapprehension of weak unthinking people*, or the *fierce contention* of subscribers concerning *original and literal sences*.

(f) The compilers could hardly think themselves *warranted* by the express Word of God, to make articles of faith which were *unwarranted* by the word of God. Either therefore, they deserted their own principles in making and imposing such Articles, or if the making and imposing such Articles was consistent with their principles, subscribers must be bound by the sence of the *compilers*.

(g) No oath can be more sacred, or more explicit, than the terms of subscription to our thirty-nine Articles. The authority, therefore, which enjoins this subscription, must be of the same nature, and must pretend to be derived from the same source from which the church of Rome pretends to derive *her* authority.

(h) All this only proves, that the Church's *professions* are inconsistent with her *actions*, in this matter of subscription. Whatever the *sense* and *honesty* of those, who composed and enjoyned subscription to these Articles at the first, might be, his Lordship's plan of justification leaves us sufficient room to question either the *sense*, or the *honesty* of their successors, who pretend to more *light* and *knowledge* in the present age.

(i) This instance only serves to shew, what ridiculous shifts men of learning are put to, when the honour and authority of the church are to be supported against truth,

chri-

christian integrity, and common sense. Dr. Waterland, poor man, was only accounting for the *professions* and *conduct* of a large majority of his *orthodox* brethren.

(k) His Lordship should have said, not, A Spiritual *Obligation*, but a Spiritual *Authority*. The *obligation* is upon the subscribers ; and my Lord is apologising for the imposers.

(l) According to this account, the Compilers meant *one* thing, and the Legislature *another*. The Compilers intended to establish *Calvinism*, as *true religion* ; the Legislature only as a *doctrine distinct* from that of the church of *Rome*. *Arminianism* was *then* the doctrine of the church of *Rome*. The consequence is, *Arminian* subscribers go against the sense, not only of the *Compilers*, but the sense of the *Legislature* ; and must not all this be very *edifying* to a Christian and Protestant people ?

— (m) The obligation is no farther of a *civil* nature, than it binds to an assent to those articles which relate to *civil Government*, viz. the *King's supremacy*, and the *authority* of the *civil Magistrate*. Where a man declares his *Faith* with respect to *religious doctrines*, his *conscience* is, or ought to be concerned ; and under whatever obligation he lays himself by such declaration, it is most undoubtedly of a *spiritual* nature, by whatever authority it is enjoyned. Whatever authority imposes terms of religious obligation upon the consciences of Protestants, is an *usurped* authority. In this case, it is *Factum contra Protestantem*.

(n) His Lordship is here a little inconsistent. He here goes no higher for the *variety* and *uncertainty* of interpretation, than the days of Archbishop *Laud*. But he dates it above, from the time when the Legislature *ratified* the *Articles* ; and what is more, he says, these different interpretations have, from that time to this, not only been *allowed*,
but

but *approved* by the Governors of our Church, as *orthodox*. So that, according to his Lordship, there has been no *standard* of *Orthodoxy* in our Church from these early days of our Reformation, to the present times. Surely men of sense must think we have had a strange set of Church Governors, who have, for more than two hundred years, *approved* a practice in subscribing these Articles, which the Articles themselves declare they were agreed upon to *prevent*.

(o) But if this is the case, why is such opposition made to the *repealing* of these Articles? Why are the men who solicit such repeal, branded as persons who want to *destroy* the Church, only for removing from her a test of which she makes no use, or an use that is worse than none, an use which serves for nothing but to shew, that neither the Church nor her Governors have any fixed Principles, and are as much at a loss for an *uniformly orthodox* confession of their faith, as if they had no Articles of Religion at all?

(p) That is to say, though the thing signified, be *not* signified.

(q) Pray, my Lord, what is the end attained by inforcing this subscription? It is impossible it should answer the end of a test of any thing, while men are *allowed* to hold, and *approved* in holding *any thing*, consistently with their subscription? As your Lordship has stated the case, subscription is a test of nothing, but the subscriber's ability to write his name.

(r) But who shall judge of the *agreement* between the sense of the subscriber, and that of *The word of God*? If this is left to the subscriber himself, why would it not be as useful and edifying to subscribe to *the word of God* at once, as to an artificial interpretation of it, upon which he may put his own sense?

(s) His

(s) His Lordship has told us before, that the obligation to subscribe is merely of a *civil* nature ; and here he tells us, that to subscribe in *any* sense which is consistent with the *public good*, answers the intention of the Legislature. Now had his Lordship been present at the debate on *February 6*, he would have heard, that the *public good* of subscription has no connection with the *sense* the subscriber puts upon the Articles, whether agreeable to the word of God or not. And this likewise seems to be his Lordship's own account of the intention of the Legislature ; who, it seems, have never deprived any man for the heterodoxy, of the *sense* he puts upon the Articles he subscribes. And if, as he farther says, “ ecclesiastical impositions in a Pro-“ testant church,” (by which, I suppose, he means imposing subscription as of *spiritual* obligation, or a matter of *conscience*) “ are, abstracted from the force of the law, im-“ pertinent and vain,” one cannot conceive for what pur-*pose* he should speak of “ *any* sense which is agreeable to the “ word of God,” (as necessary to the “ *allowance*” of a le-*gal* subscription) whose operation in the present case, his Lordship hath so effectually excluded.

(t) This is honest enough ; and amounts to a confession, that his Lordship hath been soaping the Negro. Whether My Lords our present Bishops are disposed to acquiesce in this account or not, I am not informed ; perhaps they may have changed their mode of defence. Be that as it may, it is well known that this *solid, true, and consistent* account, has been more than once recommended to persons who expressed some doubts concerning this affair of subscription. Having presented the reader with this *benevolent* instruction of a Bishop to his Nephew, we shall next exhibit the sentiments of a writer to a Bishop, which has appeared since the Petition was rejected.

Nº II.

Extracts from a pamphlet intitled, *A Letter to a Bishop, occasioned by a late Petition to Parliament for relief in the matter of Subscription.* London, Printed for J. Wilkie, St. Paul's Church-yard, 1772, with Remarks.

L E T T E R.

" The Petition aimed at more than moderate men could
 " approve ; it tended to the abolishing *all* tests, by repre-
 " senting *all* subscriptions to be inconsistent with the fun-
 " damental principles of a Protestant church, as implying
 " an infallibility in the compilers of the forms subscribed to,
 " and consequently destroying the indefeasible right of pri-
 " vate judgment." p. 1, 2.

R E M A R K.

The omission of some words and expressions in this passage, which are not omitted in the Petition, *tends* to impose upon the public an absolute falsehood. The Petitioners do not represent *all* subscriptions to be inconsistent with the fundamental principles of a Protestant church. They declare only against subscribing to the dictates of men of like prejudices and infirmities with themselves, and who can have no competent authority to impose subscription to their dictates, before they have proved themselves to be *infallible*. The *fundamental* principles of a Protestant church acknowledge no test but the *word of God* contained in the scriptures, and this the Petitioners acknowledge, exclusive of all tests of human device, and to this I presume, they will most willingly

ly subscribe, as a test which comes from an *infallible* source. The subsequent reasoning, so far as it is founded upon this πρωτότευδος, is void of all strength and pertinence.

LETTER.

" A design of such consequence as that which was intended to produce a great alteration in our ecclesiastical establishment, wanted the recommendation—of our ecclesiastical Governors especially, within whose immediate province the matter in question lay, who, on that account, had a right to be consulted, and whose concurrence would have given it great support.—In a case immediately respecting our church-establishment, the House of Commons was not perhaps the place, from whence such a design could, with most propriety, take its rise." p. 3. 4.

REMARK.

If this Gentleman is in earnest, (of which, I hope, there is no room to doubt) he will find, that few as he supposes our exceptionable things to be, (let us take Dr. Tucker's concessions for an instance) the *alterations* required to rectify them, would far exceed the alterations intended to be produced by the Petition, both in *magnitude* and number. But when you are to form the *catastrophe* of a Tragedy, all sorts of *fictions* are allowable. However the fact may turn out, this Gentleman may certainly be enabled to prove, whether *his* wisdom, or that of the Petitioners, is of the more fortunate family, by making *his* proposals to the Bishops in the first place, and postponing the Commons, till their Lordships think fit to call for their sanction. For, first or last, the Commons must have something to do in a busi-

ness of this sort ; and if they are permitted to *deliberate* upon these alterations at all, it is not much matter whether they do it in the *first*, or in the *second* instance.

L E T T E R.

" It must be confessed, that the case of subscriptions, " as they now stand by law, is far from being unexceptionable, and is certainly capable of great amendment."

p. 5.

R E M A R K.

If this is true, and if the case of subscriptions lies within the *more immediate* province of the Bishops, it is, and it has been, for many years, the *more immediate* duty of the Bishops, to take away the *exceptionable* matter, and to make the requisite *amendments*, without waiting for an application from the Petitioners, or from any other set of men whatever. The Bishops have not done this. The Bishops have not attempted to do it. The Bishops have not shewn the least public concern to have it done, and there is no apology to be made for them, but either that the case of subscriptions is *not* within their Lordships' *more immediate* province, or that the case of subscriptions, as they now stand by law, is *unexceptionable*.

L E T T E R.

" It must also be confessed, that if subscriptions to the " Articles and Liturgy be really required in the most rigorous sense the words will bear, this carries with it such a " strictness of assent to a set of propositions, some of much " difficulty and great obscurity, as, from the very nature
" of

" of the human mind, a number of men cannot truly give,
" and which therefore it is unfit to require." p. 6.

R E M A R K.

If I understand this Gentleman, he meant to say in opening his case, that no ecclesiastical establishment could subsist without a *Test*, consequently not the ecclesiastical establishment of the church of England, without requiring subscriptions. But surely, if we admit, that *more or less rigorous* senses may be put upon the words we subscribe, the idea of a *Test*, ascertaining the *uniform* assent of subscribers to the same doctrines vanishes away. And though *one* number of men cannot truly give such a strictness of assent to the difficult and obscure propositions in our Liturgy and Articles, there is *another* number of men who *say* they *can*. And if the church requires subscription as a *Test*, these latter are certainly the men whom the church ought to approve, even to the exclusion of those who *say* they *cannot*. Upon this plan, Mess. *Madan, Toplady, Pietas, Shirley*, and their brethren, ought to be countenanced and preferred by the church, above all who have written against them. For they say, and I believe they truly say, that the *most rigorous sense* the words will bear, was *the sense of those who drew up the Articles*, and enjoined subscription to them, and which, consequently, remains the genuine sense of them to this hour. But as an *exclusion* would be *inconvenient* to the *other* number, who, " from the very nature of the human mind, can-
" not truly give their assent to the Articles, in *the strictest
sense* the words will bear," they are obliged *in fact*, and by the form of subscription, to give their assent to them in the *very same terms* that *they do*, who subscribe them in *the strictest sense* the words will bear, and that for a purpose

purpose plainly and expressly specified, *viz.* For the avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true Religion, without any regard to the nature of the human mind.

L E T T E R.

" Perfect unanimity in such subjects is a thing in fact unattainable, and therefore a certain latitude of interpretation has been, as I conceive, claimed to themselves by the greater part of those who subscribe, from the reason and necessity of the thing itself, from great and respectable, I had almost said, legal authorities, and from the prevailing sense and practice of the present church." p. 16.

R E M A R K.

This writer, so far as he really wishes that things that are wrong or exceptionable in the church of England, may be rectified and amended, and takes off frivolous objections to such amendments, deserves the thanks of all honest men, and with this part of his performance I shall not interfere, whatever I may think of *his* expedients in comparison with that of the Petitioners. But when he attempts to palliate, and plaster over the grievance, as in the passage just quoted, he must excuse me, if I cannot commend either his candor or consistency. He is here contending for a *Latitude*, which, however it may be *taken*, is certainly not *given*. It may be true, that " unanimity in such subjects" [I suppose he means such subjects as the subjects of our Articles] " is in fact unattainable," but if *procuring Unanimity, and preventing Diversity*, are the same thing, both they who composed, and they who established our Articles by *Law*, took it for granted,

ed, that unanimity was *in fact* attainable; and their *purpose* to attain it by subscription, is expressly declared, not only in the title of the Articles, but by the terms in which subscription is enjoined in the 36th Canon. Both the Church and the Law acknowledge and declare this *purpose* to this hour, and will continue to declare it so long as those forms remain, and common language is allowed to convey common sense. Our Author says “*a certain* latitude of interpretation is claimed.” But a *certain* latitude is capable of being defined and specified; whereas nothing can be more *indefinite* or *uncertain* than the latitude *taken*. And the latitude which implies that a *negative* and an *affirmative* are the same thing, is just as justifiable as a latitude consisting in using a word in the subscriber’s *own sense*, which has a different meaning in the Article. That is to say, neither the one sort or the other of these Latitudes is justified either by the *Church* or the *Law*, notwithstanding the practices or opinions of all the *Lauds*, the *Burnets*, the *Bulls*, or the *Hoadleys*, which the Letter-writer can muster up.

L E T T E R.

“ It seems to me, doing but an ill office to our public establishment, and to our clergy who act under it, to endeavour to represent this liberty so just and reasonable in itself, I may say even necessary, as unlawful, by arguing against the legal authority of a Royal Declaration, and treating Bishop Burnet’s Casuistry as fraudulent and jesuitical.” p. 22, 23.

R E M A R K.

It is doing a much worse office to a Public Establishment, which pretends to be founded on the word of God only, to represent

represent it as *allowing* of a Liberty to *prevaricate*, and to pervert common language from its genuine sense, merely to avoid the imputation of usurping an authority, which the said establishment in its most solemn declarations *occasionally renounces*. If Bishop Burnet's casuistry is *really jesuitical and fraudulent*, it is a real service to the public establishment to shew that it does not espouse it. Was it a *good office* to the public establishment to condemn subscription to the thirty-nine Articles, as a *great imposition*? Bishop Burnet, however, did this; and having done it, what end can his *casuistry* be supposed to answer, but to enable the *Subscribers* to be a match for the *Imposers*, in *their own way*? With respect to the Royal Declaration, the Letter-writer's arguments in support of its *legality*, will do just as well for King James the Second's Declaration for Liberty of Conscience. The House of Commons branded the former as illegal and unconstitutional, upon the same principles, that the convention Parliament stigmatized the other. And I cannot but hope the Letter-writer was a little mistaken in the principles of the Bishop to whom his pamphlet was addressed, if he thought to make his court to him, by advancing such doctrine.

L E T T E R.

“ It is understood on all hands, that both the clergy and
 “ the laity have departed in many instances from the op-
 “ nions of our first Reformers; and it is presumed, that
 “ they have in such instances departed rightly, from the
 “ great improvement of religious knowledge, and the su-
 “ prior advantages which we, in consequence of it, have en-
 “ joyed. Shall we be called back again to preach doctrines
 “ which are almost forgotten, and at which every congre-
 “ gation,

" gation, who are competent judges of them, would be surprised and disgusted? Would this be the best and most edifying way of performing our obligations to that church in which we act as ministers, and of fulfilling with good faith, the promises we made when we undertook the office? I apprehend no such congregation would wish their Pastor to acquit himself of his duty in such a manner; or accuse him of prevarication and fraud for accommodating old expressions, where they can be accommodated, to what is acknowledged on all hands more conformable to scripture and good sense." p. 27, 28.

R E M A R K.

This general departure of both clergy and laity from the opinions of the first Reformers, (supposing it to be true,) is the strongest possible argument, in favour of the Petitioners, for laying aside the opinions of our first Reformers, as standards of orthodoxy in the church of England, and for adhering to the promise the clergy make when they undertake the office of Pastor, viz. *to teach the people nothing, as necessary to salvation, but what they are persuaded may be proved by the scriptures.* What opinion must the laity have of the clergy, when they come to know, that in general, they daily subscribe *ex animo* to the truth of opinions which they have forsaken, and which they are obliged to forsake, or to break the solemn promise they make when they undertake their office? Will not every congregation, which consists of competent judges of the case, conclude, they can have no dependence upon the sincerity of such Pastors? On another hand, if both clergy and laity have departed *rightly* from the opinions of our first Reformers, why are those opinions still retained in the church of England as standards of

Faith and Doctrine for both her Clergy and Laity? I say for *both*; for it is well known, that several Divines of the establishment have held, and yet hold the Laity to be bound by the doctrine of the Articles, as well as the Clergy who subscribe them. I cannot avoid, on this occasion, congratulating the Letter-writer upon the good fortune he has met with in having a congregation, who are competent judges of those points of *much difficulty* and *great obscurity*, some of which it should seem, have puzzled some clerks of no despicable abilities.

Dr. *Tucker* seems not to have been so happy. He tells us, that *common congregations* know not the difference between *Arianism* and *Sabellianism*, and yet he says, that without this knowledge, the Athanasian Creed cannot be understood. I take it for granted, each of these Gentlemen took their measures of the *competency* of common congregations from the portions of knowledge they found in the congregations to which they have ministered respectively. But with respect to the matter of fact, is this Letter-writer the only man in the kingdom who is ignorant, that very considerable numbers, both of Clergymen and Laymen, strictly adhere to the opinions of the first Reformers? That many of the clergy so *adhering*, carry off large congregations from those Pastors who *depart* from those opinions? That considerable numbers, even in the congregations of these *departing* Pastors, refuse to hear them, because they have so *departed*? It is not consistent with the Letter-writer's *modesty* to say, that *all* these *adhering* clergy are either absolutely *unlearned*, or relatively *ignorant* of the *improvements* he speaks of. It is not consistent with his *charity* to say, that these *adhering* congregations are *less competent judges*, than the congregations which have *departed*. It would not, I am afraid, be consistent with *truth* to affirm either of these things.

things. And it is most certain, that what the *departing* clergy call *accommodation*, the *adhering* clergy and people call *fraud* and *prevarication*, without ceremony or circumlocution. By the restrictive clause in this extract, *viz.* where *they can be accommodated*, the Letter-writer seems to acknowledge, that there are instances, where such expressions as he refers to, *cannot* be accommodated either to scripture or good sense. What shall we call the *Latitude* that is taken in subscribing *these* expressions? *Accommodation* we cannot call it; and if we must not call it *Prevarication*, it seems to be incumbent upon the Gentleman to furnish us with a term which may save the credit of the *departing* subscribers. Are inconsistencies of this kind honourable to a public establishment which claims to be founded on the *word of God*? Is it honourable, is it a good office to such public establishment, to defend such inconsistencies by examples and precedents, taken from dispensations and subterfuges used in our Law-courts, and other sorts of intercourse of secular commerce? Is it becoming the office, or the obligations of our spiritual watchmen, to sit still and see this unedifying state of things, without so-much as *attempting* to redress it, or explaining themselves to the public, why they do not? Is it sufficient to say, that “ *Alterations are full of obvious difficulties, and perhaps of unforeseen inconveniences, from which even good Statesmen and honest Divines may shrink without our special wonder?*” Was the risque to be run upon attempting such alterations, greater to my Lords the Bishops, than to a few private Clergymen assembled at the Feathers Tavern? These worthy few, it seems, saw no difficulties or inconveniences which the Legislature might not have removed without any ill consequence. And other people are apt to say, that the Lay part of the Legislature would have found no difficulties or

inconveniences in granting the Prayer of the Petitioners, if the Bishops had not signified their *unwillingness* to have it granted. But I will press the Letter-writer no farther to account for this conduct of our Church Governors. His benevolence and candor in shewing a desire to *free* his petitioning brethren from an *uneasiness and disquiet of mind, which can arise only from their integrity*; deserve their thanks, and more particularly his observation, that " *subterfuges and reserves* are always painful to honest and ingenuous minds; " and when men have no sinister end in view, but mean " only to discharge the office they undertake faithfully, " they submit with reluctance to whatever has the appearance of these, to whatever may give others the most distant suspicion of their honour and integrity." p. 32, 33. Which the Dean of Gloucester may compare at his leisure, with his own decent and christian proposal to the *scrupulous*, to take on with the Dissenters.

No III.

Extract from *A Collection of several pieces of Mr. JOHN LOCKE, published by Mr. DES MAIZEAUX, printed for R. Franklin, 1724.*

Among these pieces is, *A Letter from a certain person of Quality to his Friend in the country, giving an account of the Debates and Resolutions of the House of Lords, in April and May 1675, concerning a Bill, entitled, An Act to prevent the dangers which may arise from persons disaffected to the Government.*

The prevention of these dangers consisted in a Test to be taken by all such as enjoyed any beneficial office or employment, ecclesiastical,

ecclesiastical, civil, or military, Privy Counsellors, Justices of the Peace, and Members of both Houses. The debates upon that part of this Test which concerned the civil Government are not to my present purpose. The latter part of it ran thus.

I do swear that I will not endeavour to alter the Protestant Religion, or the Government either of Church or State.

When this oath came to be debated,—“ The Earl of Shaftsbury very well urged, that it is a far different thing to believe, or to be fully persuaded of the truth of the doctrine of our church, and to swear *never to endeavour to alter*: which last must be utterly unlawful, unless you place an infallibility either in the church or yourself; you being otherwise *obliged to alter*, whenever a clearer or better light comes to you (1). And he desired leave to ask, where are the boundaries, or where shall we find how much is meant by the *Protestant Religion* ?

“ The Lord Keeper, thinking he had now got an advantage, with his usual eloquence, desires *it might not be told in Gath, nor Published in the streets of Ascalon*, that a Lord of so great parts and eminence, and professing himself for the church of England, should not know what is meant by the *Protestant Religion* ! This was seconded with great pleasantness by divers of the Lords the Bishops (2). But the Bishop of Winchester, and some others of them, were pleased to condescend to instruct that Lord, that the Protestant Religion was comprehended in the XXXIX Articles, the Liturgy, the Catechism, the Homilies, and the Canons.

“ To this the Earl of Shaftsbury replied, that he begged so much charity of them to believe, that he knew the Protestant Religion so well, and was so confirmed in it, that

“ he

" he hoped he should burn for the witness of it, if Providence should call him to it. But he might perhaps think some things *not necessary*, that they accounted *essential*; nay, he might think some things not true, or agreeable to the scripture, that they might call doctrines of the church. Besides, when he was to swear, *never to endeavour to alter*, it was certainly necessary to know, *how far the just extent of this oath was*. But since they had told him, that the Protestant Religion was in those five tracts, he had still to ask, whether they meant those whole Tracts were the Protestant Religion; or only that the Protestant Religion was contained in all those, but that every part of these was not the Protestant Religion.

" If they meant the former of these, then he was extremely in the dark to find the doctrine of *Predestination*, in the 17th and 18th *Articles* to be owned by so few great Doctors of the church, and to find the 19th Article to define the church directly as the independents do (3). Besides the 20th Article, stating the *Authority of the Church*, is very dark, and either contradicts itself, or says nothing, or what is contrary to the known Laws of the land. Besides, several other things in the thirty-nine Articles, have been preached and writ against by men of great favour, power, and preferment in the church (4).

" He humbly conceived the *Liturgy* was not so sacred, being made by men the other day, and thought to be more differing from the dissenting Protestants, and less easy to be complied with, upon the advantage of a pretence well known unto us all, of making [such] Alterations as might the better unite us; instead whereof, there is scarce one alteration but widens the breach (5). And no ordination allowed by it here (as it now stands last reformed in the *Act of Uniformity*) but what is *episcopal*,

" pal, insomuch that a Popish Priest is capable, when converted, of any Church Preferment, without Re-ordination; but no Protestant Minister not episcopally ordained, but is required to be re-ordained: as much as in us lies, unchurching all the foreign *Protestants* that have not Bishops; though the contrary was both allowed and practised from the beginning of the Reformation, till the time of that Act, and several Bishops made of such as were never ordained Priests by Bishops (6). Moreover, the uncharitableness of it was so much against the interest of the Crown and Church of England, (casting off the dependency of the whole Protestant Party abroad) that it would have been bought by the Pope and the French King at a vast sum of money; and it is difficult to conceive so great an advantage fell to them merely by chance, and without their help, so that he thought to *endeavour to alter*, and restore the Liturgy to what it was in Queen Elizabeth's days, might consist with his being a very good Protestant.

" As to the *Catechism*, he really thought it might be mended; and durst declare to them, it was not well there was not a better made.

" For the *Homilies*, he thought there might be a better book made; and the third homily, of *repairing and keeping clean* of Churches, might be omitted (7).

" What is yet stranger than all this, the *Canons* of our Church, are directly the old Popish Canons, which are still in force, and no other; which will appear if you turn to the statute 25. Hen. VIII. c. 19. confirmed and received by 1. Eliz. where all those Canons are established, until an alteration should be made by the King, in pursuance of that Act, which thing was attempted by Edward VI. but not perfected, and let alone ever since,

" for

" for what reasons, the Lords the Bishops could best tell (8).

" And it was very hard to be obliged by oath, *not to endeavour to alter*, either the English Common Prayer Book, or
" the Canon of the Mass.

" But if they meant the latter, that the *Protestant Religion* is contained in all those, but that every part of those
" is not the *Protestant Religion*, then he apprehended it might
" be in the Bishop's power to declare, *ex post facto*, what
" is the Protestant Religion or not, or else they must leave
" it to every man to judge for himself what parts of those
" Books are or are not; and then their oath had been much
" better let alone (9).

" Much of this nature was said by that Lord and others,
" and the great officers and Bishops were so hard put to it,
" that they *seemed* willing and convinced to admit of an ex-
" pedient."

In consequence of this *seeming* willingness, certain *expedients* were offered by certain Lords, who thought as Lord *Shaftsbury* did; particularly *one* by Lord *Grey of Rolston*.

" But," says the Narrative, " the Lord Treasurer, who
" had privately before consented to it, speaking against it,
" gave the word and sign to that party, and it being put
" to the question, the major vote answered all arguments,
" and the Lord *Grey's* proposition was laid aside (10)."

R E M A R K S.

(1) The duty of *altering* upon the accession of *more light*, is so manifest upon the principles of the Protestant Religion, that they who affirmed upon a late occasion, that *no alterations were necessary*, must be obliged to affirm also, that almost an hundred years are elapsed without the least addition to the light afforded to these Divines of *Charles the Second's*

Second's time; in whose good company Dr. *Tottie* accordingly thinks it an honour that he and his fellows are reproached for prevarication.

(2) These facetious Bishops were certainly wiser in their generation, than the Bishop of *Winchester*. They had a staunch majority on their side, which made *explanations* quite unnecessary. They were well aware of the consequences, the moment they should make a serious answer to the Earl of *Shaftsbury's* demand.

(3) His Lordship meant, that, according to this 19th Article, "EVERY congregation of faithful men, in the " which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministred, according to Christ's ordinance, " in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the " same," is a true, visible, *independent* church of Christ. The Article is evidently aimed at the pretensions of the Roman church, which claims to be the only visible catholic church throughout the world, and, as such, the Head of all particular churches, and intrusted with the power of appointing ordinances and officers to rule and govern them all. Now the doctrine of the Article could not be urged in its full extent, against this pretence, without subverting the claim of every *national* church, to appoint ordinances and officers for the particular churches within the limits of the civil jurisdiction in which it is established ; that is to say, without espousing the plan of the Independents. Old *Rogers* saw how hard this would bear upon our own national establishment, and therefore, in analysing the former part of the Article, he forges two propositions, which are neither expressed nor implied in the terms of the Article, viz. 1. *There is but ONE church.* 2. *The visible church is a CATHOLIC church.* Which was giving

back to the Romanists, all that the Article meant to take from them. But this Article hath of late puzzled others more than it did old *Rogers*. Archdeacon *Tottie* (who, by the way, hath composed a *new creed*, with the requisite formalities of, *We believe*, &c. and hath had the honour of gaining the *assent* and *consent* of the clergy of his Archdeaconry to the numerous articles of it) having accommodated the terms of this 19th Article to his purpose of disguising the plain sense of the 20th, tells his audience, “ We are “ there” [i.e. in this 19th Article] “ told, that *this church*” [the church in the 20th which hath power to decree, &c.] “ may err, even in matters of Faith.” *What church* may err in matters of Faith? Surely not the church in the which *the pure word of God is preached*, at least so long as that church continues to adhere to what is preached. The Archdeacon goes on. “ And it,” [the 19th Article] “ instances in “ the churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, as “ well as Rome.” That is to say, the Article instances in Churches wherein the *pure word of God*, is *not* preached. But what are *these instances* to the church wherein *the pure word of God is preached*? Is the church of England *one* such Church, or not? Why, a — yes, but — “ Dr. *Tottie* never “ heard that the church of England ever laid any claim to “ infallibility.” Perhaps not; but did he ever hear the church of England, or any one of those who are authorised to speak for her, acknowledge that she *hath erred*, with the same candor and freedom with which the 19th article taxes the churches of Jerusalem, &c. to have erred? The Church of England therefore claims to be an *unerring church to-day*, whatever she may be *to-morrow*. And it is undoubtedly in this capacity, that she claims power to decree rites and ceremonies

remonies, and authority in controversies of Faith, a *power* and *authority* which she cannot pretend to, if she is put upon a level with those churches which *have erred*, not only *in their living and manner of ceremonies*, but also *in matters of Faith*. For no church can have power or authority to decree *erroneous* ceremonies, or to decide in favour of *erroneous* Articles of Faith. And yet if the Archdeacon's argument, drawn from the 19th Article, hath any view, it is to put the church of England into the same circumstances with the churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome, which have erred both in manner of ceremonies, and matters of Faith, and consequently, have no power or authority to decree the one, or decide the other.—But perhaps we are seeking for a meaning where the honest Dignitary had none, but to raise a little dust to accommodate his logic to the sagacity of his audience. See Dr. Tottie's charge, 1772, p. 10, 11.

(4) As this hath continued to be the case ever since this period, a collective view of these *preachings* and *writings* for a hundred years by past, might not be unedifying, and may perhaps be exhibited in due time, and will serve to give us some notion of the extent of that *latitude*, said to be *allowed* in his Majesty's Declaration, under which the orthodox subscribers shelter themselves to this hour. And as Dr. Tottie justly observes, though this Declaration should not prove to be *legal*, such an exhibition will shew, that, what some people in this degenerate age, call *Prevarication*, is completely justified by the *practice* of these *eminent lights* of our church in *Charles II's* days.

(5) One would hope that no argument can be drawn from the fate of the Dissenter's Bill in a certain August

Assembly, that the same wretched policy is still in vogue amongst us.

6. I have heard it said, that as the Act of *Uniformity*, 14. Car. II. hath no healing retrospective clause confirming these presbyterian Ordinations, if the ordination of an incumbent of the present time could be clearly derived from one of them, though an hundred years ago, the law would oblige such incumbent to be reordained, before he could be intituled to the profits of his Living. And even then, he would have to shew, that the reordaining Bishop could make out his succession from King Harry's Bishops, without one break in the episcopal Manœuvre, by the unhallowed hands of a Presbyter: and whatever may be the *Law*, this we know is the *Divinity*, which entitles our *brethren*, the Catholic Priests, to step over the threshold without the ceremony exacted of our protestant *adversaries*, who have only, it seems, *pretended* Holy Orders.

(7) His Lordship probably, proposed the omission of this Homily, in consideration of the little importance of the subject of it, when compared with the rest. Or perhaps, he might see in it, (as who may not) some traces of that very superstition, which is censured in the three foregoing discourses, *Against peril of Idolatry, and superfluous decking of churches*. A sort of *Peril* of which, it seems, we need not be apprehensive, since a certain enlightened Dignitary published his book intituled, *The Ornaments of Churches considered, with a particular View to the late Decoration of the parish church of St. MARGARET, Westminster*; wherein the author lays himself out to confute all the arguments urged in the said Homilies, against *setting up images in churches*, with a profusion of learning and zeal, which would not disgrace the subtlety

subtlety or the cause of a *Bellarmino*. The orthodox of the present mode would, I am afraid, be displeased with us should we say, that neither this writer, nor the eminent Doctor who decorated the chapel in *Charlotte-Street*, with a picture of the *Annunciation*, could subscribe the *thirty-fifth Article* of the Church of England, without a spice of *prevarication*. Both of them, no doubt, had their salvos. Both of them, no doubt, saw the necessity of asserting the religious honour due not only to the virgin MARY, but to St. GEORGE of *Capadocia*, and St. CATHERINE of *Alexandria*, against the *Fanatics*, who were for adhering to the plain sense of two or three obsolete Homilies.

(8) These Laws of *Henry VIII.* and *Elizabeth*, stand just as they did in 1675, under the *Proviso*, that "such Canons, &c. be not contrariant or repugnant to the Laws, Statutes, and Customs of this Realm, nor to the damage or hurt of the King's Prerogative Royal;" which gives many of them a currency in our Ecclesiastical Courts at this day. The *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, prepared in the reign of King *Edward VI.* was intended to put the Canon Law upon a less exceptionable footing. Perhaps matters are just as well now as that Reformation would have made them; but why all other Reformation of the Canon Law should be *let alone* for two hundred years, is a question that is frequently asked, but not easily answered. The plan of the intended Reformation of the Ecclesiastical Laws, took in the modification of Doctrines. Dr. *Tottie* hath condescended to take an Article from it, for the use of his *new creed*. Had the Petitioners ventured upon such a step, they would have been told of their presumption in departing from the established Faith.

(9) By

(9) By good luck, it was let alone. But a commodious *succedaneum* in the 36th Canon hath made the loss of this oath the less to be regretted, particularly as the subscriptions there enjoined, do not leave it to every man to judge for himself what parts of those books are, or are not the Protestant Religion; superseding all *ex post facto* declarations but one, viz. that the established dignity of those five tracts renders the whole *unalterable*, and taking away all occasion of specifying the particulars of the *Protestant Religion*.

(10) How happy are we in these times, when the major vote is of no service to any cause, without the superior argument? But the case is indeed too serious for *pleasantry*, unless it is the *pleasantry* of the *winners*. To others it must be a subject of unfeigned sorrow, that the leaders of our Theological Fashions are got no farther in the science of Church-policy, than the system of a set of men who conformed their Protestant discipline to the views of a Popish King. Ye spirits of *Burnet*, *Tillotson*, *Locke*, *Clarke*, *Newton*, *Hoadley*, &c. what is become of your *Labours*, to prepare the minds of the rising generation for the execution of the generous plan of Christian Reformation, you so clearly pointed out to them! What of the *Hopes*, which some of you expressed, that religious oppression could not long survive the re-establishment of civil Liberty by those gracious Princes who delivered us from the Politics of a *Petre* and a *Bolingbroke*! But the scene is too mortifying for a retrospect. Well may we say with *Ophelia*,

— Woe are we,
T'have seen what we have seen, see what we see.

F I N I S.

